

HOW DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ASSOCIATES WITH WORK AND FAMILY CONFLICTS BY RELIGIOSITY AMONG MARRIED PERSONS

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Abstract

Previous studies have investigated different psychological factors predicting domestic violence. However, there has been limited research on the roles of work and family conflicts i.e., work-to-family (WFC) and family-to-work (FWC) conflicts and religiosity. This study, therefore, probed the predictive role that work, and family conflicts enforce on domestic violence among selected persons who are married in Osun state, Nigeria and also investigated the indirect effect of religiosity in the association. A cross-sectional research design consisting of 220 married persons (Mean age = 35.40, SD = 5.87, Females = 58.6%) responded to the domestic violence scale (DVS), work and family conflict scale (WFCS), and religiosity scale (RS). Results of the hierarchical regression analysis revealed a significant predictive effect of family-to-work conflict (FWC) on domestic violence among married persons. The study also found that religiosity plays a significant predictive role in domestic violence among married persons. The mediation analysis using Hayes PROCESS Macro indicated that the link between FWC and domestic violence was partially mediated by religiosity as the direct effect, total effect and indirect effect of this association are all significant. The study, therefore, concluded that FWC has a direct significant impact on domestic violence and that religiosity plays a significant part in the link between FWC and domestic violence among married persons. The study recommended that religious leaders should further provide guidance on managing family-related conflicts among married persons.

Keywords

intimate partner violence, family violence, intimate partner abuse, job stress, developing country

Introduction

The issue of domestic violence (DV), also recognized as intimate partner violence, is a universal household concern which has generated immense research attention, especially among psychologists and other concerned stakeholders. This concern is in an effort to reduce the devastating problems of domestic violence and its consequences among married persons, their children and society at large. World Health Organization (WHO, 2013) defines domestic violence as abusive behavior between partners in a marriage, family, dating or cohabitation relationship, as well as in other intimate relationships. Domestic violence plays out in different ways such as in sexual abuse, physical mistreatment, economic exploitation, psychological abuse etc. (Aihie, 2009). In countries and cultures across the world, domestic violence varies in severity and frequency (Okorie et al., 2020). Violence against women and men is common all over the world, irrespective of racial background, religious conviction, nationality, and social class. However, available evidence shows women as more victims of domestic violence than men (WHO 2013; Subhashchandra et al., 2022). In 2020, it was recounted that the lifespan

incidence of domestic violence remained high in developing countries, extending from 5% in Armenia and Comoros to 40% in Afghanistan (Coll et al., 2020). Also, in Papua New Guinea, prevalence rates of 46.1% and 47.6% were reported by the United Nations Population (2021) for the years 2015 and 2018, respectively.

In Africa, exposure to domestic violence is high in Kenya (80%), Morocco (69%), and Jordan (49%) (United Nations, 2021). Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, it has been reported that 48% of women in Nigeria have experienced various forms of domestic violence (United Nations, 2021). Recently, reports of instances of domestic violence have been growing in all media platforms. On 1st April 2022, in Lagos Nigeria, a man was alleged to have roasted his Scotland returnee wife to death (Usman, 2022). Also, a popular Nigerian gospel singer, allegedly died because of domestic violence on April 8, 2022 (Ochogwu, 2022). On 20th July 2022, a resident of Osun State also in Nigeria, was allegedly set on fire by his wife following a disagreement (Adeyemo, 2022). All these news and reports are some of the disturbing and worrisome consequences of domestic violence among wedded persons in Nigeria. Besides, domestic violence has been found to have physical and psychological consequences like physical injuries, disability, anxiety, drug abuse, depression, sleep problems, hypertension, and suicide (Family Violence Prevention Fund, 1999; Anolue & Uzoma, 2017; Okorie et al., 2020). The impacts of domestic violence are enormous as they affect the general health of the sufferers and the culprits, the psychosocial progress of the youngsters in the family and the general socio-economic and security development of the society (Adejimi et al., 2012). In an effort to curb this family problem, the Nigerian government in 2015 ratified the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, to safeguard the citizens against various forms of violent aggression. Despite this Act, the problem is still high among married persons in Nigeria.

Several studies (Oginyi et al., 2020; Subhashchandra et al., 2022; Aboagye et al., 2022; Agboola & Ojo, 2022; Okhakhume et al., 2016) have explored various factors that contribute to domestic violence in Nigeria, such as psychological well-being, personality profiling, psychological distress, alcohol abuse, religion, level of education, marital satisfaction, sexual autonomy, marital infidelity, and socio-economic status. However, the direct impact of work and family conflict, in addition to the indirect influence of religiosity, has not been extensively studied in the domestic violence literature in Nigeria. Therefore, it is crucial and timely to investigate further the psychological factors that may affect domestic violence among married individuals in Nigeria.

As postulated by the job demands-resources model of Demerouti et al. (2001) and Bakker and Demerouti (2007), all professions have their own burdens and allied resources to cope with them. Work-family conflict has been designated as an important component of the job hassles that most people grapple with (Schaufeli, 2017) with attendant consequences like domestic violence. Meanwhile, religiosity may serve as a resource to mitigate the consequences. Ademuyiwa et al. (2021) define work-family conflict as a situation where a person's perception of participating in one role inhibits their ability to fulfil the expectations of another task. This conflict is two-way - work can affect family life and vice versa. Work-family conflict (WFC) ensues at the time when one's duties at home obstructs their ability to perform their duties at work, and vice versa. However, work and family are two crucial features of an adult's lifecycle that are not always compatible, leading to conflicts between them (Bakker et al., 2008; Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2007). The literature discusses two facets of work-family conflict which are the work-to-family conflict (WFC) and family-to-work conflict (FWC). Despite their close relationship, their diverse antecedents and outcomes have made scholars study these two domains separately (Byron, 2005; Michel et al., 2011). WFC is primarily predicted by work-related variables such as work-related strain, work excesses, and stringent

work hours. On the other hand, FWC is primarily affected by family-oriented factors such as stress in the family, parental overload, and family involvement (Büyüksahin-Sunal et al., 2022).

Eby et al. (2005), and Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2005) have shown that the interference of work with family and the meddling of family with work have adverse social, physical, and psychological consequences. Büyüksahin-Sunal et al. (2022) found that both WFC and FWC decrease marital happiness and increase the possibility of domestic violence. Seo et al. (2014) reported that work-family conflict positively influenced intimate partner violence (IPV) in a study of 293 Air Force personnel in marital relationships in Korea. In another related study, Melzer (2002) found that Korean military personnel in conjugal relationships, who had suffered from adverse working conditions often engage in intimate partner violence at home. Likewise, Burch (2020) reported that work-family interference remained a negative determinant of family contentment in a longitudinal study. Additionally, individuals who encounter more work-family conflict are less supportive at home, which lowers their partner's degree of marital satisfaction (Bakker et al., 2009). Increased work-family conflict was responsible for the aggression and blame experienced within the family and this in turn determined marital displeasure as reported by Judge et al. (2006).

Based on the aforementioned past studies it was proposed that:

Hypothesis 1a: There is a significant predictive effect of work-to-family conflict (WFC) on domestic violence among married persons.

Hypothesis 1b: There is a significant predictive effect of family-to-work (FWC) conflict on domestic violence among married persons.

Nigeria is a highly religious country as most Nigerians are ardent Christians or Moslems. The term religiosity refers to involvement in the pursuit of meaning within the framework of formally recognized institutions that serve as conduits for spirituality (Mahoney, 2013). In the connection of work-family conflict as related to intimate partner violence, religiosity is a component that may be important. It is one of the beliefs and behaviors that are vital in marriage life, particularly in Nigeria. It is often considered a resource or constructive force that cushions the effect of any negative eventualities or conflict in marriages and life generally (Afolabi, 2020). Although studies (Ellison & Anderson, 2001; Higginbotham et al., 2007) have shown that religiousness is negatively linked to intimate partner violence; contrariwise, Afolabi (2020) found that religion significantly influences domestic violence among married persons. Similarly, Ghodrati et al. (2019) also reported that religious beliefs did significantly influence the incidence and duration of domestic violence touching women. In their research, Eloh and Bolarinwa (2020) discovered that religion had a substantial curbing impact on the frequency of domestic violence impacting womenfolk in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Additionally, a finding by Akintoke (2016) showed that religious beliefs have a restraining impact on domestic violence among married persons. Again, Aduloju et al. (2015) also established that religious beliefs and ethnic background have no relationship with domestic violence, but Amoran et al. (2017) discovered that when compared to Muslims and adherents of traditional religions, Christians were prone to suffer from intimate partner abuse. According to a study by Lehrer et al. (2009), modest or small levels of religious practices are linked to a decreased susceptibility to violence, whereas high levels are not. This study, therefore, hypothesized that religiosity will predict domestic violence. Henderson (2014) emphasized the intervening effect of religiosity on work-family clash among African Americans. In Malaysia, Achour and Boerhannoeddin (2011) found that religious practices lessen the influence of work-family conflict among Moslem women academic staff. Meanwhile, Selvarajan et al. (2020) reported from their study that a high level of religiosity reduces family-to-work conflict but exacerbates work-to-family conflict. Therefore, the study further hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 2: Religiosity will significantly predict lower domestic violence among married

persons.

Hypothesis 3a: Religiosity will significantly mediate the work-to-family (WFC) conflict and domestic violence link among married persons.

Hypothesis 3b: Religiosity will significantly mediate the family-to-work (FWC) conflict and domestic violence link among married persons.

Methods

Research design and study participants

The study made use of the cross-sectional research design with the participants consisting of 220 married persons (91 males and 129 females), who were conveniently selected in Ile-Ife community. Their ages range from 21 to 58 years, their mean age is 35.40 and their standard deviation is 5.87. Examination of their religious affiliation revealed that the majority 174 (79.1%) practiced Christianity, while 46 (20.9%) practiced Islam. Respondents' educational qualifications revealed that 64 (29.1%) had primary/secondary certificates, 20 (9.1%) had colleges/diploma certificates, 125 (56.8%) had bachelor's degrees, 8 (3.6%) had master's degrees, while 3 (1.4%) had PhD degrees.

Research instruments

Domestic violence was assessed with the use of a 25-item partner abuse scale by Hudson (1997). The scale was designed to assess perceived physical abuse among married persons. The scale ranged from 1 (none of the time) to 7 (all the time). Examples of items in the scale include: "My partner pushes and shoves me around violently", "My partner physically forces me to have sex", "My partner makes me afraid for my life". The scale was reported to have a reliability of 0.90 by the author and in this study, McDonald's Omega (ω) which is recommended to be better than Cronbach's alpha was used to obtain the internal consistency of the scale (Hayes & Coutts, 2020). We got the Omega (ω) of 0.81 for the scale in the study.

Work-family conflict in this study was assessed by means of the 10-item work-family conflict scale authored by Netemeyer et al. (1996). This scale has two dimensions: items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 measure WFC and items 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 measure FWC. Sample of the scale's items include "my work prevents me from spending sufficient time with my family" and "the demands of my family interfere with work-related activities". The scoring of the scale is on a five-point Likert format ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The authors reported a reliability of 0.88 for WFC, 0.89 for FWC and the full scale as 0.89 while in this study, Omega (ω) of 0.90 was reported for WFC and Omega (ω) of 0.86 for FWC.

Religiosity was captured using the 20-item measure created by Joseph and DiDuca (2007). The scale was used to assess participants' religious preoccupation beliefs. Two examples of the items on the measure are "I feel happy thinking of God" and "I can't make important decisions without God's help". The scale was also scored using a five-point Likert format from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability of the scale as reported by the author is 0.95, while Omega (ω) of 0.85 was reported for the scale in the study.

Procedure and data analysis

Permission before data administration was sought by the researcher from all intended participants and the essence, together with the objectives of the research, were clearly clarified. Approval for the study was also obtained from the relevant authority. All consenting married persons were given a copy of questionnaires to fill while anonymity and confidentiality of respondents' information were assured throughout the data collection phase. In all, a total number of two hundred and fifty (250) copies of questionnaires were distributed among the

respondents, but only two hundred and twenty (220) were duly completed and retrieved back. The data collection lasted for about two weeks across seven communities in Ile-Ife. Data were first checked for normality. To examine the distribution of data, we used skewness and kurtosis as measures of univariate distribution. It was established that the value of skewness indices lies between 0.031 and -1.042 and kurtosis indices were between -1.08 and 1.43, which were within the specification value of Tabachnick and Fidell's acceptable range of +2 and -2 (Tabachnick, & Fidell, 2015). Using IBM-SPSS software version 24, descriptive statistics were used to analyze socio-demographic features; inferential statistics, including zero-order correlation, were employed to look at associations between research variables, and IBM-SPSS PROCESS Macro by Hayes (2017, v.3.5) and hierarchical multiple regression was used to test the hypotheses formulated.

Results

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations among study variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Work-to-Family Conflict (WFC)	1			
2. Family-to-Work Conflict (FWC)	-.46**	1		
3. Religiosity	-.07	-.05	1	
4. Domestic violence (DV)	-.08	.18**	-.17**	1
Mean	19.56	16.05	82.70	70.08
SD	8.66	7.99	10.15	32.02

Note: *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

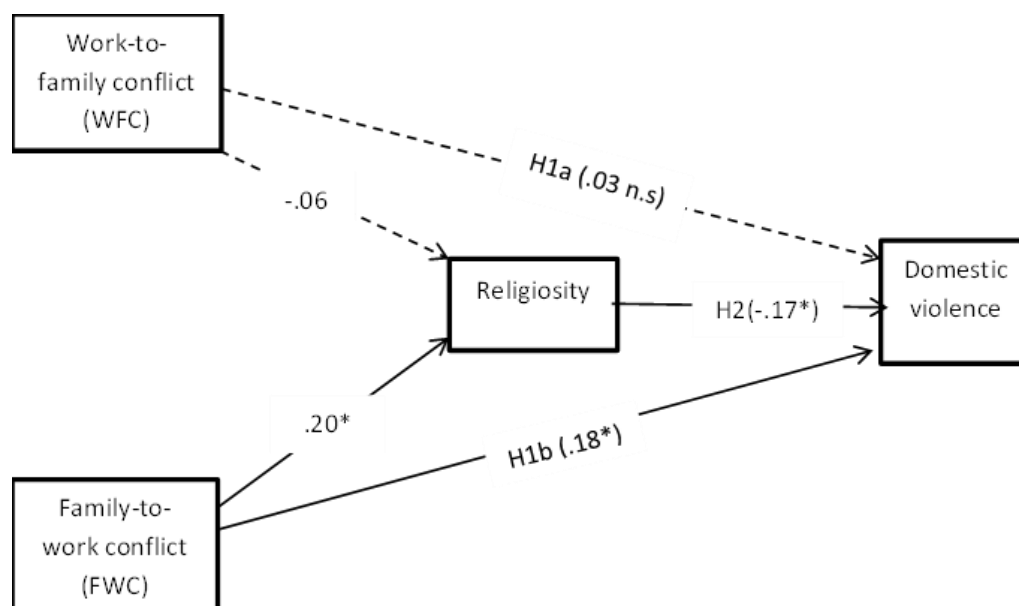
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

SD - Standard deviation

The results gathered in **Table 1** revealed that there was no significant association between WFC and domestic violence among married individuals ($r = -.08$, $p > .05$). Meanwhile, there was also a significant positive correlation between FWC and domestic violence ($r = .18$, $p < .01$), implying that an increase in FWC tends to increase in domestic violence among married persons. It also revealed that religiosity has a negative relationship with domestic violence ($r = -.17$, $p < .01$). This also means that married persons with high religiosity tend to have decreased domestic violence.

Hypotheses testing

Direct and mediation analysis was performed using hierarchical multiple regression and SPSS process macro developed by Hayes (2017). Simple mediation was estimated using Process Macro Model 4 with a 95% bias-corrected bootstrap (5000) confidence interval. This method is considered superior to the Baron and Kenny, and Sobel tests, both of which rely on the assumption of normal distribution before mediation can occur (Hayes 2009; Preacher & Hayes 2004). The analysis summary is shown in **Figure 1** and **Table 2**.

**Figure 1. Hierarchical multiple regression of predictors of domestic violence**Note * $p < .05$

Note not significant

————— significant

Table 2. Mediating effect of religiosity on the dimensions of work-family conflict and domestic violence relationships

Indirect effect pathways	Estimate	BC 95 % CI	
		Lower limit	Upper limit
WFC → Religiosity → domestic violence	-.007	-.182	.039
FWC → Religiosity → domestic violence	-.215*	.005	.011

Note. Bootstrapped confidence intervals were constructed using 5000 samples. Values that do not have zero within the 95% confidence interval are statistically significant. BC-bias corrected, CI -confidence interval, WFC- Work-to-family conflict, FWC- Family-to-work conflict

The results of the hierarchical multiple regression in Fig. 1 above indicated that WFC was not significantly associated with domestic violence ($\beta = .03$, $p > .05$), while family-to-work conflict was significantly and positively related to domestic violence ($\beta = .18$, $p < .05$). The study found that H1a was not confirmed, but H1b was confirmed. Additionally, the research showed that religiosity had a significant negative relationship with domestic violence ($\beta = -.17$, $p < .05$), confirming H2. The study also examined whether religiosity mediated the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC and FWC) and domestic violence. The results indicated that the indirect effect of WFC on domestic violence via religiosity was not statistically significant (H3a; bootstrap estimate = $-.007$, lower limit CI = $-.182$, upper limit CI = $.039$, $p > .05$). However, the indirect effect of FWC on domestic violence via religiosity was statistically significant (H3b; bootstrap estimate = $-.215$, lower limit CI = $.005$, upper limit CI = $.011$, $p < .05$). Therefore, the mediating effect of religiosity was established for FWC but not for WFC. In other words, FWC was associated with reduced domestic violence via religiosity.

Discussion

The study investigated the association between the dimensions of WFC and FWC on

domestic violence, along with the indirect effect of religiosity in the link between work and family conflict dimensions (WFC and FWC), and domestic violence among married persons. As hypothesized, our findings revealed that WFC was not associated with domestic violence, though FWC was found to be related to increased levels of domestic violence. These results indicate that experiencing increased WFC may not lead to domestic violence, whereas having increased FWC seems to lead to increased domestic violence. This study outcome is in agreement with Büyükşahin-Sunal et al. (2022), who found that both WFC and FWC tend to decrease marital satisfaction and serve as recipes for domestic violence. The study outcome, on the other hand, was not in line with some other previous studies (Eby et al., 2005; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). The results of the study contradict the findings of Seo et al. (2014), who discovered a positive association between work-family conflict (WFC) and domestic violence in a sample of married Air Force personnel in Korea. Additionally, the study's findings also differ from Melzer's (2002) research, which found that adverse working conditions among married Korean military personnel often led to intimate partner violence at home. The justification for the finding may be that married persons who have difficulties managing their family to work roles such as managing family-related stress tend to be frustrated and aggressive, which predispose them to engage in different forms of domestic violence. This outcome further shows that FWC has more devastating effects on the family than the WFC among the study samples.

As expected, in the second hypothesis it was found that religiosity plays a significant negative prediction on domestic violence among married persons (i.e., H2 was confirmed). The findings of this study suggest that married individuals who have strong religious beliefs are not likely to engage in partner abuse. This conclusion is consistent with previous studies such as Ellison & Anderson (2001), and Higginbotham et al. (2007), which have shown that religiosity and intimate partner violence are inversely related. The study also supports the findings of Afolabi (2020), who found that religion has a significant influence on domestic violence among married individuals. Similarly, Ghodrati et al. (2019) reported that religious beliefs have a significant bearing on the frequency and duration of domestic violence against women. The study's conclusion is in line with Eloh and Bolarinwa's (2020) discovery that religion has a substantial impact on the frequency of intimate partner abuse among women. The reason for this outcome may be that religious beliefs tend to represent a positive force that discourages married individuals from engaging in any form of domestic violence, as such actions would go against their religious faith or teachings.

Our study further aimed to investigate whether religiosity mediates the association between work-family conflict (WFC) and family-work conflict (FWC) with domestic violence. Our findings showed that religiosity only played an indirect role in the FWC-domestic violence relationship (H3a), but not in the WFC-domestic violence relationship (H3b). This suggests that religiosity is an important mechanism that can help reduce the influence of FWC on domestic violence. Our results are consistent with Selvarajan et al. (2020), who reported that a high level of religiosity reduces family-to-work conflict but exacerbates work-to-family conflict. It is plausible that married individuals who experience FWC are better able to cope with this conflict due to their deep religious faith and practices, which could help them deal with personal challenges and result in less domestic violence. However, it is also possible that the complex nature of conflicts arising from the work to the family domains in a marriage may make it difficult for religiosity to play a significant role in reducing domestic violence among married individuals.

Conclusion, strengths, and implications

The purpose of this study was to examine the correlation between work-family conflict

(WFC) and family-work conflict (FWC), and domestic violence among married individuals in Nigeria, sub-Saharan Africa. The study also aimed to investigate whether religiosity plays a mediating role in this relationship. The study found that FWC is positively associated with domestic violence, while WFC has no significant association with domestic violence. The outcome also showed that religiosity plays a role in mediating the relationship between FWC and domestic violence. The study has several strengths. Firstly, it contributes to the literature on domestic violence by highlighting the influence of the WFC domain on domestic violence among married individuals. Secondly, it adds to the field of positive psychology by providing further support for the idea that married individuals experiencing FWC may have lower levels of domestic violence if they are religious. The results of our study have applied suggestions for professional psychologists, marriage counsellors, and religious leaders. The study suggests that work-family conflict (FWC) should be considered a risk factor for domestic violence, while religiosity should be seen as a protective mechanism against the FWC-domestic violence relationship. Therefore, the study recommends that psychologists encourage religious practice in their engagement with clients to help balance family and work domains effectively and efficiently among married persons. This measure will help reduce or eliminate domestic violence among married persons. Religious leaders should also emphasize the negative impacts of domestic violence on their followers. The government, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, should continue to educate married persons, intending couples, and the public on the dangers of domestic violence through various platforms such as radio, newspapers, and social media outlets.

Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research

Although this study has made significant contributions to domestic violence literature, it has some limitations. The data was collected from only one state in Nigeria, which limits the generalizability of the results. Additionally, the study only measured the physical aspect of domestic violence and did not assess non-physical abuse. As a result of the cross-sectional nature of the study design, the study is unable to establish a causal relationship between the study variables. To address the limitations, future studies should expand the scope and increase the sample size. It is also suggested that a qualitative form of data collection be incorporated into future studies to achieve more robust results. Finally, other variables such as resilience, personality traits, and emotional intelligence could be investigated in relation to domestic violence among married persons.

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