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SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND RELATIONSHIP ANXIETY AS CORRELATES OF EXPRESSED RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN LAGOS STATE

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Abstract
This study investigated social media usage and relationship anxiety as correlates of expressed Relationship Violence among Undergraduates in Lagos State using Correlation survey research design of quantitative nature. The population of this study is made up of Undergraduates in Lagos State. Two hundred and forty (240) Undergraduates in Lagos State constitute the sample for this study selected through multi-stage sampling technique from 3 randomly selected tertiary institutions in Lagos state. Three standardized scales were used for data collection for the study. Data was analyzed using Multiple Regression to answer the research question and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to test the hypotheses raised for the study at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The result of the study revealed that there was significant associative relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable (Relationship Violence among Undergraduates) in order of magnitude. Also, social media usage significantly correlates significantly with Relationship Violence among Undergraduates, r (238) = 0.44, p<.05. Likewise, relationship anxiety r (298) = 0.31, p<.05 correlates significantly with Relationship Violence among Undergraduates. It was recommended that Undergraduates should be encouraged to develop positive attitude to relationship building and be emotionally sensitive and accommodating to other people's feeling to avoid conflict and relationship violence.

Keywords: Lagos State, Social media usage, Relationship anxiety, Relationship violence and Undergraduates.

Introduction

The occurrence of relationship violence among undergraduates in tertiary institutions can be devastating and traumatic with its associated physical, psychological and socio-emotional suffering that tends to put most victims in a frustrating and helpless situation. This has made relationship violence among undergraduates to be a pressing social and public health issue that is quite distressing and in need of societal attention. This phenomenon continues to eat deep into the

social foundation of undergraduates in Nigeria, hindering progress of their psycho-socio-emotional and intellectual development. For example, Ogboghodo and Obarisiagbon (2019) noted that romantic relationship violence often have copious depressing health effects on the wellbeing of victims as it is often associated with the expression of anxiety, depression, symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, antisocial behaviour, use of drugs, alcohol and suicidal attempt. World Health Organization (2019) affirmed that relationship violence prevent students from having a pleasant memorable social interactive experience and hinders full development of their potentials in all ramifications.

However, it is of note that curbing this negative vice is one of the core issues value education tends to address because the principles of value education is essentially focused in helping students develop positive values and attitudinal dispositions towards learning, fostering the consciousness of initiating and sustaining resourceful interpersonal relationship with other, being responsible, analyze issues objectively and make reasonable judgment concerning different issues they may encounter at different developmental stages so that they could take proper action to creatively deal with the challenges in their future life and avoid violence. Thus, values education refers to the characteristic of educational practice that is used to develop ideal moral dispositions through nurturing in students core priority values and attitudes in the likes of developing the capacity of respecting other peoples' point of views, express integrity, empathy, benevolence, diligence, commitment to responsibility, Perseverance, being law abiding, persevering, negotiate relationship responsibly and work in unity with others (Thornberg, 2023).

This indicates that value education is a significant tool that can be used to curb issues of relationship violence among undergraduates as Vijayakumar (2023) report affirmed that value education helps students develop a strong moral and ethical compass as it plays a vital role in building positive character essential for students' to behave in an upright manner, promote a sense of unity and cohesion in society; fosters a harmonious and peaceful coexistence, prevent occurrence of conflicts, violence and becoming responsible citizens. Despite this importance of the attributes of value education, relationship violence among undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Nigeria is an abnormality that is seen as part of social development process and as such treated ignorantly with kid gloves.

This act of negligence has made some undergraduates to see violence that occur within romantic relationship as a normal way of life despite the associated incidence of assaults, rape, physical injuries, and likely deaths that occur in some cases. For example, Marupeng (2020) reported that in South Africa, cases of boyfriends killing their girlfriends over flimsy argument were rampant. As observed in one of the incidence, a woman's body was found under the boyfriend's bed, wrapped in blanket in Daveyton town. Likewise, in Nigeria, on 7th February 2022, in Ogun Sofiat an undergraduate was killed by her ex-boyfriend who machete her head

with a cutlass while she shouted for help (Olatunji, 2022). In addition, Idio (2022) via media report gave horrifying account of girlfriends whose boyfriends poured acid on them and left them facially disfigured beyond recognition. The male partners may also be a victim/survivor of similar problem or vice-versa. However, for female students, it can fatally affect their academic progression and achievements and thus affect gender equality in tertiary institutions. In Nigeria, Ogunwale and Oshiname (2017) found that 20% to 87% of students while in dating relationship were affected by physical, sexual, psychological and/or emotional violence. In some instances, relationship violence can occur due to inability of people to communicate appropriately, express empathy, manage conflict, cope with feelings of jealousy, and rejection. This makes investigating social media usage and relationship anxiety as correlates of expressed relationship violence among undergraduates in Lagos State ideal and essential.

Interestingly, the use of social media in present contemporary digital dispensation has overwhelmingly changed young adults' social interaction perception, especially within their interpersonal romantic relationship context. For instance, the way people stay glue to social media platforms such as Wassapp, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, etc can induced conflict between individuals in romantic relationship in the form of relationship violence expressed in an aggressive and harmful manner. Although this possibility is observed within all age groups from teens to adults, however, emerging young adults within ages 15 to 35 most likely experience more relationship violence as a result of conflicts that arise due to their habitual use of social media to stimulate their love life (Smith & Duggan, 2013). Indeed, with 84% of emerging young adults consistently using at least one social media platform, to stimulate and reinforce their love life experience, they represent the age group with the highest prevalence of social media usuage (Pew Research Center, 2021). Moreover, they use a wider variety of social media (e.g., Tik Tok; Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram,) than older adults (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). Empirical data suggests that when individuals spent more time on social media, they are more susceptible to experience feelings of jealousy in their romantic relationship that could result to violent conflict (Daspe et al., 2018).

The result of a cross-sectional study conducted by Daspe et al (2018) among 1508 individuals involved in a romantic relationship who are habitual in the use of social media found that the jealousy and conflict that subsequently arose was positively associated with the relationship violence they expressed towards each other. They also found that both partners Facebook-related jealousy contributed to each other's intimate partners' violence perpetration (Daspe et al., 2018). Alternatively, Demirtaş-Madran (2018) hypothesized, in a cross-sectional study of individuals involved in a romantic relationship and found a significant and positive link from intimate partners' relationship violence perpetration to Facebook-related jealousy. The interpretation of this association is that the more glue partners' are to

the use of media, the more likely they express relationship violence due to potential threats to their relationship induced by jealous. Taken together, these findings support a positive and potentially bi-directional association between social media usage, jealousy and relationship violence perpetration.

Relationship anxiety occurs when individuals in romantic interpersonal relationship persistently experiences and express feelings of worry, insecurity, fear and doubt regarding an individual's state of relationship or compatibility with a partner. Someone experiencing relationship anxiety might experience persistent intrusive thoughts surrounding a relationship, which may leave them doubting the relationship's longevity and where it's heading. Relationship anxiety encompasses some features of social anxiety disorder. More specifically, both conditions can cause a person to experience significant discomfort about rejection. The effects of this anxiety may hinder a person's ability to function in the relationship appropriately and be a gateway to relationship violence as a measure of ego defense mechanism to easy out bottled up tense and frustration (Powell & Abulhosn, 2022). For example, Momeñe et al (2021b) stated that anxiety, interpersonal sensitivity and suspicion, influence the occurrence of relationship violence, emotional dependence and permanence in violent relationships. With regard to the effect of relationship violence on the mental health of emerging adults in romantic relationship, research has shown that the greater relationship violence experienced, the more serious the states of anxiety, stress and depression (Tarriño-Concejero et al, 2023). In relation to psychological relationship violence, recent research has shown that cyberbullying has been associated mainly with depression and anxiety, with girls mostly at the receiving end (Cantu et al, 2022; Cava et al., 2020). According to An et al (2019) those who had suffered sexual violence had a higher risk of experiencing an anxiety disorder over and above any other mental disorder, with girls being the most affected. Likewise, Ulloa et al (2014) found that physical violence was positively associated with increased symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Relationship violence has become a complex phenomenon as it tend to comprise of behavioural dispositions and relationship styles that projects provocations, verbal, physical, psychological and emotional assaults and sexual harm, as well as control of a partner through coercive tactics due to unknown apprehension on the part of partner in romantic relationship (Gracia-Leiva et al., 2019). Tarriño-Concejero et al (2023) conducted a cross-sectional study of descriptive quantitative nature to determine the prevalence of relationship violence among undergraduates dating in 8 public universities in Andalusia Spain and its relationship with anxiety, depression, and stress in young Andalusian university students. Their findings revealed that the most prevalent cause of relationship violence among dating undergraduates is relationship anxiety that spur from fear of losing out in a dating relationship and it gives rise to behaviours such as control-surveillance and cyberbullying (68.42–42.90%), followed by sexual (16.68–3.57%)

and finally physical (5.60–1.92%). Statistically girls scored higher in being victims of behaviours related to cyberbullying, control-surveillance and sexual violence and boys in perpetrating psycho-emotional, physical and sexual violence. All types of relationship violence showed significant and positive correlations with anxiety, stress and depression.

Brem et al (2018) found relationship anxiety and alcohol use in jealous men was significantly related with partner violence. Moreover, Ihongbe and Masho (2018) reported that expressed relationship anxiety is associated with a higher risk of relationship violence and victimization in young couples. Anxiety is known to be part of the diathesis for relationship violence among emerging adults and it is considered a direct consequence of relationship violence, or indirect, when suffering is caused by the social rejection for emerging adults' violent partners (Temple et al., 2016). Also, a significant independent contribution of relationship anxiety to emerging adults partner violence has been reported (Buunk & Massar, 2019). Therefore, in view of the above context, the theoretical framework of this study is anchored on social identity theory formulated by social psychologist Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 70s and 80s. The postulation of this theory highlights that social identity projects people's concept about what they derive in association within an interpersonal relationship or membership within a group and considering their relevance in a social group. It explains how the consciousness of possible gain in interpersonal relationship predicts behaviour. Thus, social identity theory provides an important avenue for theoretical development in domestic violence research because all behaviour, including aggression and expressed act of violence is rooted in issues of self and identity. To understand interpersonal relationship violence, there is need to understand the meanings individuals attribute to themselves in a situation, that is, their self-definitions or identities. In all interpersonal interactive relationship, the goal of individuals is to confirm their identities and sustain it. When their identities are not confirmed, persons may control others in the situation to make them respond differently in order to confirm their identities. If control does not work, aggression and violence may be used as a last resort to obtain control and, in turn, confirmation of identity. Thus, social identity theory can help explain domestic interpersonal relationship violence by showing how a lack of identity confirmation at the individual level is tied to the control process and aggression at the interactive level (*Tajfel & Turner, 1986).*

Statement of the Problem

Presently, the rate at which issues of relationship violence occurs among undergraduates in Nigeria is gradually becoming a serious epidemic concern with its adverse health consequences and potential occurrence of the incidence of death. The gravity of the consequences of relationship violence among undergraduates in Nigeria whenever it occurs has made it a priority issue in the fields of health and

human rights as it is now well recognized as a serious devastating life threatening phenomenon that has cut across the boundaries of Nigeria societal culture, economic, social and religions spheres because it is observed that tertiary institutions in the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria have often recorded issues of relationship violence with severe physical and mental health consequences. For example, In Nigeria, Ogunwale and Oshiname (2017) found that 20% to 87% of students while in dating relationship were affected by physical, sexual, psychological and/or emotional violence. In some instances, relationship violence can occur due to inability of people to communicate appropriately, express empathy, manage conflict, cope with feelings of jealousy, and rejection. This implies that lots of factors are noted to be responsible for the continual occurrence of this devastating phenomenon for which low level of value education is included. In view of this context, this study Investigated social media usage and relationship anxiety as correlates of expressed relationship violence among undergraduates in Lagos State

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to empirically investigate social media usage and relationship anxiety as correlates of expressed relationship violence among undergraduates in Lagos State and to specifically:

1. Find out the associative relationship that exist between social media usage, relationship anxiety and expressed relationship violence among undergraduates in Lagos State
2. Ascertain the relative contribution of the independent variables (social media usage and relationship anxiety) on the dependent variable (expressed relationship violence among undergraduates) in Lagos State

Research Questions

1. What associative relationships exist between social media usage, relationship anxiety and expressed relationship violence among undergraduates in Lagos State?
2. What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (social media usage and relationship anxiety) on the dependent variable (expressed relationship violence among undergraduates) in Lagos State

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between social media usage and expressed relationship violence among undergraduates in Lagos State
2. There is no significant relationship between relationship anxiety and expressed relationship violence among undergraduates in Lagos State

Methods

Correlation survey research design was used for this study. Also the population for this study consists of all male and female undergraduate students from University of

Lagos, Lagos State University Ojo and Federal College of Education Technical Akoka. These institutions were randomly selected for the study. The sample for the study comprised of 240 male and female undergraduates students that have experienced interpersonal relationship violence. The Severity of Violence Scale (SVS) was used to screen and select them employing a multi-stage sampling technique.

Instruments

Interpersonal Relationship violence was measured using the **Severity of Violence Scale (SVS)** by (Marshall, 1992) 46-item scale with 9 subscales that measure 2 major dimensions (threats and actual violence). For example it has items such as how often has your partner: Acted like a bully toward you; slapped you around your face and head; threw an object at you; beat you up; threatened to kill you. The responses were coded on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (not often) to 4(very often). For individuals reporting on abuse with an intimate partner the internal consistency ranges from: .92 to .96 for college students; .89 to .96. Threats = .94; Acts of violence = .95.

Social Media Engagement Scale by Ni et al (2020) was used to measure the extent to which participants of the study use social media in facilitating their relationship. This was measured by the following questions: "How many times did you use social media in the past month?" (the frequency of your social media use in the past month: 1 = "Less than once a week"; 2 = "Less than once a day"; 3 = "2∼3 times a day"; 4 = "4∼5 times a day"; 5 = "6 or more times a day"), "How much time are you online on social media every day?" (the average time you are online on social media every day: 1 = "Less than 30 min"; 2 = "31 min∼2 h"; 3 = "2 ∼6 h"; 4 = "6∼12 h"; 5 = "12 or more hours"), "How much time do you actually spend on social media every day?" (the actual time you use social media for every day: 1 = "Less than 30 min"; 2 = "31∼60 min"; 3 = "1∼2 h"; 4 = "2∼4 h"; 5 = "4 or more hours"), "How many years has it been since you started being involved with social media?" (the length of time since you started being involved with social media: 1 = "Less than 3 years"; 2 = "4∼5 years"; 3 = "6∼7 years"; 4 = "8∼9 years"; 5 = "10; or more years"), and "How many friends do you have on social media?" (the number of friends on social media: 1 = "Less than 50 persons"; 2 = "51∼100 persons"; 3 = "101∼150 persons"; 4 = "151∼200 persons"; 5 = "More than 200 persons"), etc. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the affective engagement, behavioural engagement, and cognitive engagement were from 0.709 to 0.804.

Interpersonal Relationship Anxiety Questionnaire (IRAQ) by Rohner (2012) was used to measure Interpersonal relationship anxiety of participants used for the study. It comprises nine items describing possible emotional states of interpersonal anxiety (e.g., feeling upset, nervous or afraid). Participants evaluate each item on a

4-point scale with the levels: 4 (almost always true), 3 (sometimes true), 2 (rarely true) and 1 (almost never true). The higher the total scores the more interpersonal relationship anxiety the respondent perceives. The possible score ranges from 9 (lowest interpersonal relationship anxiety) to 36 (highest interpersonal relationship anxiety). Scores that range from 1 to 15 suggest normal relationship anxiety, from 16 to 20 mild relationship anxiety, from 21 to 27 moderate relationship anxiety and from 28 to 36 severe relationship anxiety (Naz & Kausar, 2015).

Procedure

The researchers obtained the consent of the school authorities and participants and having sought and obtained their consent, the researchers personally administered copies of the instruments with some explanation on how to complete them and the purpose of the research to the participants.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression statistical tools at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: What associative relationships exist between social media usage, relationship anxiety and expressed relationship violence among undergraduates in Lagos State?

Table 1: Correlations Matrix showing associative relationship that exists between social media usage, relationship anxiety and expressed relationship violence among undergraduates in Lagos State (N=240)

Variables	N	Mean	Std Dev	1	2	3
Relationship violence among undergraduates	240	5.16	1.83	1.000		
Social media usage	240	4.74	1.61	0.44	1.000	
Relationship anxiety	240	4.26	1.58	0.31	0.14	1.000

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

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

Table 1 shows the associative relationships that exist between the independent variables (social media usage and relationship anxiety) and expressed relationship violence among undergraduates. The results in the table revealed that social media usage ($r = 0.44^{**}$, N= 238, $P < .05$) and relationship anxiety ($r = 0.31$, N= 238, $P < .05$) correlates significantly with expressed relationship violence among undergraduates. This indicates that over indulgence in the use of social media can fuel violent crisis among individuals in romantic relationship. This could occur when partners become insensitive to each other's need due to their glue to social media chat/platform. Also, this could lead to relationship anxiety that can ignite jealousy and violence. Therefore, the research question is answered.

Research Question Two: What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (social media usage and relationship anxiety) on the dependent variable (expressed relationship violence among undergraduates) in Lagos State?

Table 2: Showing Relative contribution of the independent variables (social media usage and relationship anxiety) on the dependent variable (expressed relationship violence among undergraduates) in Lagos State

Variable	Unstandardised Coefficient		Standardised Coefficient	Rank	T	P
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Constant	1.464	.301	-		4.118	.000
Social media usage	.258	.111	.067	1st	2.366	.000
Relationship anxiety	.141	.079	.035	2nd	1.312	.000

Table 2 reveals that the relative contribution of the independent variables (social media usage and relationship anxiety) on the dependent variable (expressed relationship violence among undergraduates) in Lagos State. Social media usage has higher relative contribution (β=0.067) followed by relationship anxiety (β= .035). This implies that social media usage and relationship anxiety are major source of expressed relationship violence among undergraduates in romantic relationship. Therefore, the research question is answered.

Research Hypotheses One: There will be no significant relationship between social media usage and expressed relationship violence among undergraduates in Lagos State

Table 3: PPMC summary table showing significant relationship between social media usage and expressed relationship violence among undergraduates in Lagos State

Variable	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**N**	**R**	**P**	**Remark**
Expressed relationship violence among undergraduates	5.16	1.83	240	0.44**	000	Sig.
Social media usage	4.74	1.61				

** 0.05 Level of Sig.

The result in table 3 reveals that social media usage correlates significantly with expressed relationship violence among undergraduates (r = 0.44**, N= 238, P < .05).The hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Research Hypotheses Two: There will be no significant relationship between relationship anxiety and expressed relationship violence among undergraduates in Lagos State

Table 4: PPMC summary table showing significant relationship between relationship anxiety and expressed relationship violence among undergraduates in Lagos State

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Expressed relationship violence among undergraduates	5.16	1.83	240	0.31	.000	Sig
Relationship anxiety	4.24	1.58				

*** 0.05 Level of Sig.

The result in table 4 reveals that relationship anxiety correlates significantly with expressed relationship violence among undergraduates (r = 0.31**, N= 238, P < .05).The hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the first research question shows that significant associative relationship exist between the independent variables (social media usage and relationship anxiety) and expressed relationship violence among undergraduates. As revealed in table 1, social media usage (r = 0.44**, N= 238, P < .05) and relationship anxiety (r = 0.31, N= 238, P < .05) correlates significantly with expressed relationship violence among undergraduates. This indicates that over indulgence in the use of social media can fuel violent crisis among individuals in romantic relationship. This could occur when partners become insensitive to each other's need due to their glue to social media chat/platform. Also, this could lead to relationship anxiety that can ignite jealousy and violence. Therefore, the research question is answered. This phenomenon continues to eat deep into the social foundation of undergraduates in Nigeria, hindering progress of their psycho-socio-emotional and intellectual development. For example, Ogboghodo and Obarisiagbon (2019) noted that romantic relationship violence often have copious depressing health effects on the wellbeing of victims as it is often associated with the expression of anxiety, depression, symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, antisocial behaviour, use of drugs, alcohol and suicidal attempt. In Nigeria, Ogunwale and Oshiname (2017) found that 20% to 87% of students while in dating relationship were affected by physical, sexual, psychological and/or emotional violence. In some instances, relationship violence can occur due to inability of people to communicate appropriately, express empathy, manage conflict, cope with feelings of jealousy, and rejection. World Health Organisation (2019) affirmed that

relationship violence prevent students from having a pleasant memorable social interactive experience and hinders full development of their potentials in all ramifications.

The findings of second research question concerning the relative contribution of the independent variables (social media usage and relationship anxiety) on the dependent variable (expressed relationship violence among undergraduates) in Lagos State revealed that social media usage has higher relative contribution (β=0.067) followed by relationship anxiety (β= .035). This implies that social media usage and relationship anxiety are major source of expressed relationship violence among undergraduates in romantic relationship. Therefore, the research question is answered. This indicates that the use of social media in present contemporary digital dispensation has overwhelmingly changed young adults' social interaction perception, especially within their interpersonal romantic relationship context. For instance, the way people stay glue to social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, etc. can induced conflict between individuals in romantic relationship in the form of relationship violence expressed in an aggressive and harmful manner. Although this possibility is observed within all age groups from teens to adults, however, emerging young adults within ages 15 to 35 most likely experience more relationship violence as a result of conflicts that arises due to their habitual use of social media to stimulate their love life (Smith & Duggan, 2013). Indeed, with 84% of emerging young adults consistently using at least one social media platform, to stimulate and reinforce their love life experience, they represent the age group with the highest prevalence of social media usuage (Pew Research Center, 2021). Moreover, they use a wider variety of social media (e.g., Tik Tok; Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram,) than older adults (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). Empirical data suggests that when individuals spent more time on social media, they are more susceptible to experience feelings of jealousy in their romantic relationship that could result to violent conflict (Daspe et al., 2018).

The result of the first hypotheses reveals that social media usage correlates significantly with expressed relationship violence among undergraduates (r = 0.44**, N= 238, P < .05).The hypothesis is therefore rejected. This finding is consistent with the result of a cross-sectional study conducted by Daspe et al (2018) among 1508 individuals involved in a romantic relationship who are habitual in the use of social media that found that jealousy and conflict that subsequently arose was positively associated with the relationship violence they expressed towards each other. They also found that both partners Facebook-related jealousy contributed to each intimate partner's violence perpetration (Daspe et al., 2018). Also, Demirtaş-Madran (2018) hypothesized, in a cross-sectional study of individuals involved in a romantic relationship and found a significant and positive link between intimate partners' relationship violence perpetration and Facebook-related jealousy. The interpretation of this association is that the more glue partners' are to the use of

media, the more likely they express relationship violence due to feeling of potential threats to their relationship induced by jealous. Taken together, these findings support a positive and potentially bi-directional association between social media usage, jealousy and relationship violence perpetration.

Also, the result of the second hypotheses reveals that relationship anxiety correlates significantly with expressed relationship violence among undergraduates ($r = 0.31^{**}$, $N= 238$, $P < .05$).The hypothesis is therefore rejected. This is corroborates the findings of Powell and Abulhosn (2022) that the effects of relationship anxiety may hinder a person's ability to function in the relationship appropriately and it could be a gateway to relationship violence as a measure of ego defense mechanism to easy out bottled up tense and frustration. For example, Momeñe et al (2021b) stated that relationship anxiety, interpersonal sensitivity and suspicion, influence the occurrence of relationship violence, emotional dependence and permanence in violent relationships. Tarriño-Concejero et al (2023) conducted a cross-sectional study of descriptive quantitative nature to determine the prevalence of relationship violence among undergraduates dating in 8 public universities in Andalusia Spain and its relationship with anxiety, depression, and stress in young Andalusian university students. Their findings revealed that the most prevalent cause of relationship violence among dating undergraduates is relationship anxiety that spur from fear of losing out in a dating relationship and it gives rise to behaviours such as control-surveillance and cyberbullying (68.42–42.90%), followed by sexual (16.68–3.57%) and finally physical assaults (5.60–1.92%). Statistically girls scored higher in being victims of behaviours related to cyberbullying, control-surveillance and sexual violence and boys in perpetrating psycho-emotional, physical and sexual violence. All types of relationship violence showed significant and positive correlations with anxiety, stress and depression. According to An et al (2019) those who had suffered sexual violence had a higher risk of experiencing an anxiety disorder over and above any other mental disorder, with girls being the most affected.

Recommendations

1. University authority should consistently expose students to the ethical principles of value education and conduct healthy interpersonal relationship awareness programme to educate and give students orientation on the best ways to manage relationship crisis and the benefit of harmonious relationship to their educational and developmental wellbeing.
2. Vigorous relationship wellbeing awareness campaign should be conducted for students to be conscious of the consequences of relationship violence and the need to eradicate its harmful practices. This is necessary to foster university community and society that values gender equality and respects

the rights of women as a measure to combat deeply ingrained attitudes that perpetuate violence.

3. Furthermore, students should be exposed to counselling intervention programmes that will help them develop the needed copping mechanism adjustment and ability to manage interpersonal relationship crisis devoid of violence.

Conclusion

Relationship violence could easily occur among students when they lack the skills to manage conflict, cope with feelings of navigate rejection and jealousy. These challenges have increased with the persistent use of social media and its consequential expressed anxiety among relationship partners that often lead to violence. Therefore, there is need for basic enlightenment of students on appropriate ways of negotiating, maintaining and sustaining interpersonal relationship without occurrence of violence.

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