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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PREVALENCE AND CONSISTENT CORRELATES OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THREE WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Intimate Partner Violence Against Women (IPVAW) is a global public health problem with huge social policy implications. A quick survey of current literature reveals that very little is known about women's experiences of IPVAW in Africa as the majority of previous IPVAW studies have originated from Western, high-income countries, leaving us with questions about their theoretical relevance in low- and middle-income countries (LAMIC), such as those in sub-Saharan Africa. In this study, the author analyses nationally-representative Demographic and Health Surveys of three West African countries, involving a total of 27,306 currently-partnered women aged 15–49 years – in Gambia (2013, n=3,232), Nigeria (2013, n=20,152) and Sierra Leone (2013, n=3,922) – to report the magnitude and consistent correlates of IPVAW in these LAMIC. Data analysis involved preliminary spearman rank correlation and multivariate logistic regression models to comparatively ascertain consistent IPVAW factors across these countries. The result shows that many women still experience different forms of IPVAW in these countries. Lifetime IPVAW experience from the age of 15 ranged from 23.3% in Nigeria, 24.5% in the Gambia, to 50% in Sierra Leone, while in the last 12 months IPVAW experience ranged from 12.2% in Gambia, 19.2% in Nigeria, to 34.6% in Sierra Leone. Women witnessing parental violence during childhood and having a husband who manifests controlling behaviours were the most consistent factors significantly exposing women to IPVAW

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in all countries. However, women having tolerant attitudes towards wife-beating, the husband's alcohol consumption and women earning more than their husbands were also positive corelates of IPVAW. The results suggest the need for urgent proactive actions to protect women from IPVAW in these West African countries. Other findings relevant for policy recommendations and interventions are discussed.

Keyword: Intimate Partner Violence Against Women, Consistent Correlates, LAMIC, West Africa

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Intimate Partner Violence Against Women (IPVAW), defined as 'any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship' (WHO 2012), has continued to undermine the health, wealth, and general well-being of women globally (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2013). IPV affects at least one-third (about 35%) of all ever-partnered persons around the world (WHO 2017). In sub-Saharan Africa, IPV ranks above the global average at 36.7%, closely behind the Southeast Asia region with 37.0%, and the Middle East Mediterranean region with 37.7% (WHO 2013).

The consequences of IPVAW include physical, sexual, reproductive and mental health challenges (Campbell 2002). The psychosocial and economic burdens of IPV on individual and national budgets have also been discussed (Ansara, Hindin 2011; Warshaw et al. 2009). For instance, IPVAW could result in victim's loss of productivity, consequently poor contributions to GDP and overall poor economic development (Corso et al. 2007; Peterson et al. 2018; Duvvury et al. 2013). At the extreme, IPV sometimes results in depression, suicidal thoughts or femicide (Devries et al. 2011). Recently, the WHO (2017) reported that as of November 2017, about 38% of all female deaths were as a direct result IPVAW perpetrated by their intimate male partners (WHO 2017).

IPVAW has persisted despite several conventions and interventions. The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the United Nations' 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, and the 1998 Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Children by the Southern Africa Development Community's (SADC) are a few examples (United Nations 2020; Council of Europe 2011; African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights 1998). One major challenge with current interventions is the lack of sufficient data and studies with consistent results on IPVAW (Abramsky et al. 2011).

There is currently a debate in the literature originating from different (mostly high-income) countries on the proximate determinants and risk factors of IPVAW. Apparent inconsistencies in the IPVAW literature are attributed to differences in objectives and methodologies employed across studies. This makes comparing IPV findings across studies technically challenging. Another

challenge in the current IPV literature relates to the relevance of current IPV theorization – which mostly originated from high-income Western countries – to other economies and cultures, such as those of low- and middle-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Heise 2011; Hardesty, Ogolsky 2020). This article, therefore, contributes to the discussions by asking the questions: what factors explain women's experiences of partner-violence in sub-Saharan African countries? To what extent do the empirical realities of women in Sub-Saharan support selected theories of IPV? Finally, how consistent are IPV-factors identified in the current literature across countries and cultural boundaries in sub-Saharan Africa? To answer these questions, women's experiences in three former British West African countries (Nigeria, Gambia and Sierra Leone) will be analysed.

Relevant Theories of IPVAW

Theoretically, IPVAW is a multilevel and multifaceted phenomenon (Heise 1998), involving a host of interrelated personal, interpersonal, community-level and larger societal level factors (Heise 1998; Hardesty, Ogolsky 2020). Insights from previous research in Western and developing countries are expansive on personal and interpersonal level factors. Personal level factors refer to the individual characteristics, while interpersonal level factors refer to family or relationship-specific characteristics. A few examples of personal level factors identified as predictors of IPVAW include women and men's low literacy or educational levels (WHO 2013; Kwagala et al. 2013), alcohol misuse (Hindin et al. 2008; Avila-Burgos et al. 2009; Abramsky et al. 2011), support for patriarchal gender ideologies justifying wife-beating (Johnson, Das 2009; Butchart et al. 2010; Fulu 2016), witnessing parental violence during childhood (Chapple 2003; Abramsky et al. 2011), young age (Abramsky et al. 2011) and poverty (Goode 1971), among others. William Goode (1971) argued that low-income family men who lack material resources to lure obedience from their wives or other family members may resort to violence. For Emma Fulu (2016), gender norms prescribing social inequality and IPV are the main determinants of IPVAW globally.

However, rather than the theory of absolute resources propounded by Goode (1971), Kristin Anderson (1997) has argued that it is the amount of resources relative to their wives that men control that explains their IPVAW perpetration. Some men are jealous if a wife earns a higher income and perceive their masculine authority eroding. They therefore employ IPV as an equalizer. This relative resource theory of IPVAW found empirical support in other studies (Aizer 2010; Neetha 2004). Other reported interpersonal (relative) level factors include 'age disparity' (Otieno 2017), 'economic burdens and dependence on husband' (Dhungel et al. 2017), and the husband's controlling behaviour (Abramsky et al. 2011; Antai 2011), among others.

In addition to the debates prompted by Goode (1971) and Anderson (1997) above, many other findings are inconsistent and inconclusive, with some yet to

be tested extensively in the African context. For instance, the question as to whether women's empowerment (economic independence) protects women from IPVAW has gathered several opposing responses. A multi-country study involving eleven countries case studies by Seema Vyas and Charlotte Watts (2009) reported that, while women's economic empowerment protected women from IPVAW in 5 of the countries, it was positively associated with IPVAW in 6. Similarly, while Betty Kwagala et al. (2013) found that women's empowerment reduced the odds of women experiencing IPVAW in Uganda, Koustov Dalal (2011) found that it increased the risk of IPVAW among working women in India. These disparities could have arisen from differences in study methodologies and/or contexts. A single study with a uniform methodology and similar data, such as the current study, may be needed to test these theories in the African contexts, but beyond national boundaries.

Another current argument in the literature relates to the role that men's alcohol abuse plays in women's IPV experiences. Some pro-alcohol-IPVAW scholars have argued that men's alcohol consumption is the most significant predictor of their IPVAW perpetration (Hindin et al. 2008; Avila-Burgos et al. 2009; Solotaroff, Pande 2014). However, other scholars, such as the deviance disavowal theorists (see, Galvani 2004: 359) argued that alcohol does not predict IPVAW perpetration in men. On the contrary, abusive men drink alcohol shortly before perpetrating violence only to disavow the blame (that is to shift the blame for the crime onto alcohol). The disavowal theory argument therefore prompts interrogators to focus on men's personal attitudes towards IPVAW, rather than alcohol. Fulu (2016) therefore argued that men and women's traditional gender ideologies supporting IPVAW is the most fundamental predictor of IPVAW. In addition, there is general consensus that women (and men) who witnessed violence during childhood (i.e. if her father beat her mother) were more likely to have experienced it as adults (Abramsky et al. 2011).

For the sake of space and concision, the current article focuses on describing and explaining how the five most reported factors of IPVAW predict IPVAW in the three selected West African countries. These are (i) witnessing parental violence during childhood, (ii) spousal relative income, (iii) woman's attitudes towards IPVAW, (iv) husband's alcohol misuse, and (v) husband's controlling behaviour. Unlike most of the previous studies, the current study employs uniform methodology and similar data and investigates how consistent these factors are in predicting IPVAW in the West African countries of Gambia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. Socio-demographic factors such as the partner's age, education, household wealth, residence type (urban/rural), religious affiliations and region of residence in the country were controlled for in the same model fitted. Hence, current study tests the hypotheses that: a woman's experience of parental violence during childhood, tolerant attitudes towards IPVAW, earning more income than her husband, having a husband who controls her, or a husband who drinks alcohol will each consistently predict

increased occurrence of experiencing IPVAW from her husband in each selected West African country.

Data Analysis and Results

The study employed the domestic violence module of the nationally representative, cross-sectional, household-based demographic and health survey (DHS) data of the Gambia (2013 GDHS), Nigeria (2013 NDHS) and Sierra Leone (2013 SLDHS). DHS sample selection procedures usually involve multi-stage cluster or stratified sampling procedures, modelled after national population census sampling frames. The samples for the DHS domestic violence modules are usually only women, aged 15–49 years old, one selected per eligible household. Data on women's experiences of partnered and non-partnered violence in the previous twelve months (12 months IPV) and since age 15 (lifetime IPV) are usually collected by well-trained research assistants, using internationally standardized questionnaires. Domestic violence (DV) episodes are measured using the Conflict Tactics Scale of Strauss. To protect participants from potential backlash from abusive male partners for reporting violence, in consonance with the WHO's (2001) recommendation, only one woman is selected per household. Privacy during interviews is mandatorily and ensured. The samples analysed in the current study involved a total of 27,306 currently-in-union women aged 15 to 49 years old in Gambia (3,232), Nigeria (20,152), and Sierra Leone (3,922).

As a dependent variable a woman's experience of partner-violence within the twelve months preceding the survey was used. Any experience of physical (e.g. slapping, kicking, strangulation, burning), sexual (e.g. forced sexual acts), or emotional (e.g. threats to harm or actual public humiliation) violence from the husband or an intimate male partner was coded to '1', experiencing none is coded to '0'. Multivariate logistic regression models were fitted on the binary outcomes. The key independent variables of interest are: (i) Witnessing parental violence (that is, if woman's father beat her mother; *Never*=0, *Yes*=1, *Don't know*=2); (ii) Tolerant attitude towards IPV: A woman is coded '1' if she agrees at least once that a man could beat his wife if she – 'goes out without telling him', 'neglects the children', 'argues with him', 'refuses to have sex with him', or 'burns the food', that is, violating some traditional gender norms. A woman who disagrees with wife-beating in all scenarios is coded as '0' (zero tolerance); (iii) Woman's relative income compared to husband's: Woman is coded as '0' if she earns 'less than her husband', '1' if 'about same as him', '2' if 'more than him', and '3' if woman is uncertain or the information is missing; full-time housewives and non-working women were grouped with those who earned less; (iv) Husband controlling behaviour: Controlling behaviour involves if husband is – jealous woman talks to other men, always accuses her of unfaithfulness, does not allow her to meet her female friends, is always wanting to know where she is,

(and/or), tries to limit her contact with her family. The amount of control ranked from None=0, One=1 control, Two=2 controls, Three or more= 3 or more controls; and, (v) Husband alcohol consumption (Yes=1, Never=0).

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Basic descriptive background information on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents are provided here. As expected, most men were older than their wives. The mean age (in years) of the women (W) and Husbands (H) were Gambia (W=30.2; H=42.7), Nigeria (W=31.0, H=41.1), and Sierra Leone (W=31.9, H=41.9). In all the countries, more samples were from the rural (R) areas: Gambia (R=51.2%%), Nigeria (R=63.2%), Sierra Leone (R=71.7%). The majority of the women have had no formal education (Gambia=61.3%, Nigeria=47.6%, Sierra Leone=73.4%) or only primary education (Gambia=13.7%, Nigeria=19.3%, Sierra Leone=13.1%), secondary (Gambia=20.8%, Nigeria=25.6%, Sierra Leone=12.0%), and higher (Gambia=4.2%, Nigeria=7.5%, Sierra Leone=1.5%). The majority of the women were currently married (Gambia=99.5%; Nigeria=97.2%; Sierra Leone=95.8), only few were cohabitating (Gambia=0.6%; Nigeria=2.8%; Sierra Leone=4.2%). The widowed, divorced or separated in the larger samples were excluded from the current study to account for IPVAW experience in the previous twelve months only. Notwithstanding, among these currently-in-union women, experiences of marital dissolution, remarriage and polygyny were common. One-tenth of the women in Nigeria (10.4%) and the Gambia (11.5%), and more than one-fifth (20.9%) in Sierra Leone were not in their first marriage. About one-third of the women in each country were in polygynous relationships: Nigeria (32.1%), Sierra Leone (32.8%), and the Gambia (36.6%).

Although slightly higher than women, a large proportion of the men had low educational qualifications: more than half of the men in the Gambia (57.0%) and Sierra Leone (73.4%), and a little less than half in Nigeria (39.1%), have had no formal education. Only a few men have had either a secondary education (Nigeria=25.6%; Gambia=20.8%; Sierra Leone=12.0%) or higher education (Nigeria=7.5%; Gambia=4.2%; Sierra Leone=1.5%).

Prevalence of key variables in the study

With the exception of Nigerian women, the majority of the women still supported wife-beating for at least one reason: from more than two-thirds in Sierra Leone (69.2%) and the Gambia (67%), down to less than half in Nigeria (38.3%). Witnessing parental violence as a child was commonly reported: highest in Sierra Leone (29.5%), next by the Gambia (9.4%), and lowest in Nigeria (8.2%). However, alcohol consumption was most common among Nigerian men (17.4%), than Sierra Leone (15.7%) and the Gambia (1.1%). More than half of the women reported several husband controlling behaviours: Gambia (50.2%), Nigeria (64.2%) and Sierra Leone (79.3%). Among the women who are employed and earn cash income, the majority earn less than the husband: Gambia (92.3%), Nigeria

(91.3%) and Sierra Leone (92.0%). However, a few also earned more than their husbands: with Sierra Leonean women as the highest (4.6%), followed by Gambian (4.0%), and Nigerian (4.4%) women. Very few women earn about the same as their husbands: Sierra Leone (2.3%), Nigeria (3.6%) and the Gambia (1.8%).

Women reported high frequencies of various forms of IPVAW experienced in the 12 months preceding the survey. IPVAW experiences by type of violence are as follows: physical (Sierra Leone=27.7%; Nigeria=9.1%; Gambia=6.4%), emotional (Sierra Leone=21.0%; Nigeria=15.6%; Gambia=8.2%), and sexual (Sierra Leone 5.5%; Nigeria=3.6%; Gambia=1.1%). Experiencing any of physical, sexual or emotional violence therefore ranged from more than one-third (34.6%) in Sierra Leone (34.6%) to about one-fifth (19.2%) in Nigeria and above one-tenth (12.2%) in the Gambia. Physical violence topped the list of type of IPVAW experienced in Sierra Leone, while in Nigeria and the Gambia, women were more likely to report experiencing emotional violence.

Results of the Multivariate Logistic Regression Analyses

Table 1 presents abridged data on the odds ratios (OR) and adjusted odds ratios (aOR) of women's experiences of wife-beating in each country. The odds ratios refer to results from simple (one variable) logistic regression model; the adjusted odds ratios refer to result from all key variables and control variables fitted into the second model. The results for other control variables are not presented in the table for reasons of space. The Table provides consistent evidence that women who experienced parental violence during childhood were significantly more likely to experience violence from their own husbands during adulthood across all the countries. The aORs and confidence intervals are as follows: Nigeria (aOR 2.2, CI 1.8–2.6, $p < 0.001$), Sierra Leone (aOR 2.2, CI 1.8–2.8), and the Gambia (aOR 2.5, CI 1.6–4.0, $p < 0.001$). Witnessing parental violence significantly increased the likelihood of experience IPVAW in adulthood by about 120% to 150%.

Table 1

Reporting multivariate logistic regression of 12 months IPVAW (with bivariate chi-square frequency, [n (%)])

Models	*n (%)*			*Adjusted odds ratios (aORs)*		
Independent variables	*Gambia*	*Nigeria*	*Sierra Leone*	*Gambia*	*Nigeria*	*Sierra Leone*
Father ever beat her mother:	252 (10.8)	541 (27.8)	2679 (16.5)	1	1	1
No (Ref.)				[1–1]	[1–1]	[1–1]
Yes	64 (23.1)	507 (46.7)	673 (43.3)	2.5***	2.2***	2.2***
				(1.6–4.0)	(1.8–2.6)	(1.8–2.8)
Don't know	44 (13.0)	224 (33.8)	307 (24.2)	1.1	1.4**	1.3
	X^2: 48*	X^2: 133*	X^2: 763*	(0.7–1.8)	(1.1–1.6)	(1.0–1.6)

Models	*n (%)*			*Adjusted odds ratios (aORs)*		
Independent variables	*Gambia*	*Nigeria*	*Sierra Leone*	*Gambia*	*Nigeria*	*Sierra Leone*
Woman justified IPVAW:	94 (8.5)	359 (31.6)	1841 (15.6)	1	1	1
No (R.C.)				[1–1]	[1–1]	[1–1]
Yes	265 (14.4)	914 (35.9)	1818 (24.8)	2.0**	1.4***	1
	X^2: 34*	X^2:11*	X^2: 232*	(1.3–3.1)	(1.3–1.6)	(0.8–1.3)
Relative income:	330(12.1)	1171 (34.6)	3286 (18.9)	1	1	1
Woman earn less (R.C.)				[1–1]	[1–1]	[1–1]
Earns about same	4 (8.2)	29 (34.6)	122 (17.9)	0.7	0.8*	1.2
				(0.2–2.2)	(0.6–1.0)	(0.6–2.4)
More than him	14 (11.4)	11 (27.2)	194 (30.4)	0.9	1.5**	0.9
	X^2: 3	X^2: 3	X^2: 38*	(0.5–1.7)	(1.1–1.9)	(0.6–1.5)
Husband controlling behaviour:	73 (4.9)	115 (15.1)	527 (7.7)	1	1	1
None (0)				[1–1]	[1–1]	[1–1]
Low control (1)	123 (15.5)	138 (23.9)	785 (15.2)	3.4***	2.6***	1.9***
				(2.3–5.0)	(2.2–3.1)	(1.3–2.6)
Moderate (2)	74 (17.0)	317 (34.6)	1121 (23.7)	3.9***	4.5***	3.1***
				(2.4–6.6)	(3.8–5.3)	(2.3–4.1)
High control (3/more)	90 (35.7)	701 (49.3)	1227 (52.3)	10.1***	11.5***	5.7***
	X^2: 274*	X^2: 288*	X^2:2500*	(6.7–15.3)	(9.7–13.8)	(4.3–7.5)
Husband drinks alcohol:	350	1010	2387	1	1	1
No (R.C.)	(12.0)	(32.5)	(15.1)	[1–1]	[1–1]	[1–1]
Yes	9 (28.4)	263 (45.5)	1273 (38.3)	3	1.9***	1.6***
	X^2:8*	X^2: 47*	X^2: 901*	(0.5–17.1)	(1.7–2.2)	(1.3–2.1)
Observations	3,232	20,152	3,922	3,228	20,152	3,922

NOTES: R.C.= Referent category; Confidence intervals in parentheses; *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05;

X^2: chi-square; Adjusted odds ratios (aORs) reports estimates for multiple logistic regression odds ratios

With the exclusion of Sierra Leonean women, women who justified wife-beating (IPVAW) for at least one reason were about 40% (aOR 1.40, CI 1.3–1.6– Nigeria) to 100% (aOR 2.0, CI 1.3–3.1– Gambia) more likely to experience it, compared to women who did not justify it. This does not mean that women demanded IPVAW because they justified it; rather the result seems to indicate that having tolerant attitudes towards IPVAW, especially supporting wife-beating and blaming IPV victim for violating certain gender roles, may prevent women from seeking redress when they experience abuse in their own

lives. In Sierra Leone, the relationship was not significant even in the simple logistic regression model.

Women's income relative to their husbands' did not predict a statistically significant relationship in two out of the three countries. Only in Nigeria did earning more than one's husband predict increased risks of experiencing IPVAW from him, while, earning about same as him provided some protections. In Nigeria, compared to women who earn less than their husbands, women who earned about same income as their husbands were about 20% (aOR 0.8, CI 0.6–1.0, $p < 0.05$) less likely, and those who earn more were about 50% (aOR 1.5, CI 1.1–1.9, $p < 0.01$) more likely to experience violence from them. However, the large confidence interval of women who earn about same as husband extending to 1.0, thus suggest the finding of this category be taken with caution.

Consistently across all the countries, women whose husbands manifest controlling behaviours such as being jealous if the woman talks to other men, always accusing her of unfaithfulness, not allowing her to meet her female friends and always wanting to know where she is, were, at least, about 90% (Sierra Leone) to 240% (Gambia) more likely to experience actual instances of violence from him, compared to women whose husband never manifest any controlling behaviour. The propensity of a woman experiencing IPVAW from her husband increased with the number of controls the husband manifests. For instance, men who manifest at least 3 controls (high) were about 470% (aOR 5.7, CI 4.3–7.5, $p < 0.001$ – Sierra Leone) to 1,050% (aOR 11.5, CI 9.7–13.8, $p < 0.001$ – Nigeria) more likely to perpetrate IPVAW; in the Gambia, such men were about 910% (aOR 10.1, CI 6.7–15.3, $p < 0.001$) more likely, compared to men who never manifest any controlling behaviours.

Without controlling for other covariates, women whose husband drinks alcohol were about 70% to 250% more likely to experience IPVAW from him compared to women whose husband does not. However, after controlling for other variables, alcohol failed to be significant in the Gambia where, as explained early, only a few men drink alcohol. In Sierra Leone (aOR 1.6, CI 1.3–2.1, $p < 0.001$) and Nigeria (aOR 1.9, CI 1.7–2.2, $p < 0.001$), men who drink alcohol were about 60% and 90% more likely to perpetrate IPVAW.

Discussion of Findings

The current study examined the magnitude and consistent correlates of male-partner perpetrated IPVAW in three West African countries (Gambia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone), to supplement sparse reporting on IPVAW in the African context. The data revealed that women's experience of any form of physical, sexual or emotional IPVAW in the twelve months preceding the survey ranged from 12.2% in Gambia, 19.2% in Nigeria, to 34.6% in Sierra Leone. Experiences of physical (6.4%, 9.1%, 27.7%), sexual (1.1%, 3.6%, 5.5%) and emotional (8.5%, 15.6%, 21.0%) violence were reported by women by country respectively.

Among the most consistently reported covariates of IPVAW reported in the previous studies reviewed, and tested in this study, witnessing parental violence during childhood, and husband controlling behaviour were the most consistent factors of IPV across the studied countries. Having a husband who consumes alcohol, women earning about same as husband and women tolerating IPVAW are also positively associated with IPVAW experience.

Common explanations as to why women who witnessed parental violence during childhood eventually experience it themselves in their own relationship during adulthood (transgenerational IPVAW) may be because women witnessed parental violence are also more likely to normalize, justify and tolerate it (see, Uthman et al. 2011). Using a multilevel structural equation modelling, researchers found that 'women that witnessed physical violence were more likely to have tolerant attitudes towards IPVAW and women with tolerant attitudes were more likely to have reported spousal IPVAW abuse' (Uthman et al. 2011: 1).

Again, the finding that women whose husbands manifest controlling behaviours, such as getting jealous when woman talks to other men or limiting her movements, were more likely to perpetrate IPVAW against them is consistent with findings in Diddy Antai (2011), where controlling behaviour is associated with masculine patriarchal gender power manifestation in gender relations and a precursor to partner-violence among Nigerian men. This study shows that controlling behaviour and IPVAW are strong correlates in the African contexts in this study.

The husband's alcohol consumption (Abramsky et al. 2011) behaviour and wife's tolerant attitudes towards wife-beating were also covariates of IPVAW, but not consistent across countries. Alcohol only failed to predict IPVAW in the Gambia. This might be because very few Gambian men drink alcohol as they are mostly Muslim (only 1.1 % drank any alcohol). However, in Sierra Leone and Nigeria, where alcohol consumption was common among men, alcohol was significantly positively associated with IPVAW.

Similarly, relative income was only significant in the Nigerian context, such that women who earn about same as their husbands were less likely to experience IPVAW, whereas those who earned more than their husbands were exposed to greater risks of IPVAW, compared to women who earn less. The Nigerian context supports Anderson's (1997) relative resource theory, in which status compatibility in income (gender equality) protected women, while earning more than one's husband posed greater risks of IPVAW to women. As explained earlier, men might feel their masculine authority threatened if women earned more and resort to violence as a power equalizer.

Conclusion

This study suggests a number of policy recommendations based on the analysis above. First, given that parental violence and husband controlling

behaviours emerged as the most consistent predictors of women IPV victimization, these issues must be urgently addressed. Thus, mass media broadcast of the implications of children witnessing parental violence (intergenerational transmission of violence) should be made public, subjected to public or community discussions, and outrightly condemned. Similarly, various media (including social media) apparatuses should be employed to discourage attitudes tolerating any form of partner violence or violence against women at large. National child right laws prohibiting parental or elderly acts of violence before children either in real time or on the media should be promulgated and enshrined in all policies meant to protect children's rights and interests. Mass reorientation is needed to prevent and discourage men from treating the women in their lives as 'property' that could be controlled or ordered around. School curricula and vignettes on national news media (prints or electronic) should be employed in the mass reorientation program. Women are not property but equal partners as men, in both private and public lives. Social workers and social policies protecting children and providing real life social support for children in abusive homes, or homes riddled with parental violence should be made available. Such policies and programs should be empowered to include potentialities for child state adoption services, especially in cases of violent parent(s).

Secondly, given that alcohol predicted increased violence in two out of the three countries studied, the following control measures of alcohol production, distribution, exchange and consumption, particularly in relation to preventing IPV victimization of women, could be helpful. Alcohol disavowal inclination should be criminalized such that alcohol consumption will no longer an acceptable excuse for perpetration of IPV against women. All perpetrators should be held accountable and punishable by law. Increasing prices of alcoholic products, age of consumers and reducing quantities imported or produced locally could be a step in the right direction. More proactively, the consumption level of partnered men may be restricted by local laws.

Finally, given that in Nigeria, earning 'about same' income as husband/partner significantly returned some protections for partnered women, compared to their counterparts who either earn less or more than husband/partner, the following social policy implications are potentially important. In addition to mass gender value reorientation already mentioned, more women should be given equal employment opportunities and equal remuneration at the workplace as men, given they have similar qualifications. Equality in income can add to the continued demystification of male superiority and female inferiority at the workplace. Similarly in Nigeria, the result that women who earned more than their husbands/partners were significantly more likely to experience violence from them compared to women who earned less than them offered supports for the backlash hypothesis (Anderson 1997; Neetha 2004). Thus, social policy centered on women empowerment should also ipso facto include men's anti-violence orientation campaigns. That way, more male partners might have

more favourable attitudes towards female employment or women earning higher incomes than they do.

Intimate partner violence against women is common in West Africa – more frequent in relationships where husband manifest controlling behaviour, drink alcohol and where women experience violence during childhood, justify wife-beating and earn more than their husbands. These findings suggest the need for proactive measures discussed above to combat IPVAW, such as sensitization of both sexes against IPVAW justification, socially promote egalitarian gender norms, promulgate policies against IPVAW and protect vulnerable women from IPVAW in the study settings.

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