

Gender, Gender-Value Orientation and Attitude towards the Incidence of Rape among University Undergraduates in Cross River State, Nigeria: Implications for Counselling Towards Social Reform

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ABSTRACT

There is no denial that the increasing incidence of rape has witnessed diversity in opinions across groups of different kinds. However, it is disturbing that majority of the divisions including those in the judiciary system have in the past blamed the victims of such heinous act. Consequently, this study sets out to investigate the influence of gender and gender value orientation on attitude towards the incidence of rape among University undergraduates in Cross River State. The research adopted a correlational survey research design. Three research questions were formulated and tested using regression analysis at .05 level of significance. Two-stage random sampling technique was used to select sample (382 students) for the study. Participants of the study included 225 students. A structured questionnaire with three sections (Demographic information, Gender Value Orientation Scale and Attitude towards Incidence of Rape Scale) was employed for data collection. The Cronbach's alpha (α) for the scales were .710 and .734 for the gender value orientation and attitude towards the incidence of rape scales respectively. The findings indicated that there is a joint contribution of gender and gender value orientation on attitude towards incidence of rape ($R^2 = .493$, $p < .05$, $F(2,223) = 35.81$). Also there is a significant relative contribution of gender ($\beta = -1.338$; $t = -2.455$, $p < .05$) and gender value orientation ($\beta = .471$; $t = 8.025$, $p < .05$) on attitude towards the incidence of rape. In addition, it was observed that there is a significant moderating effect of gender on the influence of gender value orientation on attitude towards the incidence of rape (R Square Change = .023; F change (1,222) = 6.862, $p < 0.05$). It can thus be concluded that gender and gender value orientation are significant determinants of attitude towards the incidence of rape. As a result, there should be a collective effort of members of the society and institutions within it to take necessary action towards attainment of social reform.

Key Words: Gender, gender-value orientation, attitude towards the incidence of rape

INTRODUCTION

The issue of rape is not an abstract one as it is easily relatable to members of every society (Aborisade,

2022). In Nigeria for instance, during the COVID 19 lock down in 2020, there was a widespread outrage under the hash tag “we are tired” after some reports of young women who were raped and brutally murdered in the process, went viral on social media (Orjinmo, 2020; Aborisade, 2022). This incidence sparked up a strong wave of sentiments and emotions especially among Nigerian women, as Orjinmo (2020) captured in one of the articles published by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the various stories and opinions of women in the country. The report revealed the current situation in the Nation as gathered from the experiences of rape victims and their families, stating that many Nigerians have blamed its legal system of constituting a bottle neck to convicting suspected perpetrators of this crime. As stated in the report, the legal system which should provide justice has rather been reported to blame female victims of rape for being the cause of their own predicament (Orjinmo, 2020). Its report further stated that some of these victims along with their families fear stigmatization and police extortion. Meanwhile, statistics retrieved from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2019) further revealed that between years 2015-2017, there has been an increase in the incidents of rape in Nigeria as 2016 recorded 72.1% increase. Evidence also showed that women and girls within the ages of 1 to 28 years were at higher risk of rape at home, in school and other places. However, what is most intriguing about the report from the NBS, is that most rape incidences took place at home as 67.5, 76.7 and 69.3 percent of rape incidences occurred at home in 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively. These alarming reports raise a lot of questions in one’s mind.

As indicated in statistics, women are more vulnerable to this unfortunate event in places where they should feel safe such as at home or in school. However, research studies have shown that negative attitudes towards when it comes to the issue of rape is quite common in most societies (Kazmi et al., 2023). Researchers have taken various positions as to why these negative attitudes exist. Some have stated that race, ethnicity, age and influence of culture are associated with people’s attitude towards the incidence of rape (Mori et al., 1995; Nagel et al., 2005). Some studies have also identified rape myths, gender roles and situational factors as correlates of attitude towards rape incidences (Li & Zheng, 2022; Szymanski et al., 1993). Members of the society also have their opinions as regards this subject, some of which may be expressed in their attitudes to rape victims and incidences (Cowan, 2000). Cowan (2000) outlined some societal views as regards the cause of rape and society’s perspective on the subject. Cowan labeled these opinions as “myths”, further defining these myths as those beliefs in the society that tend to hold the victim of rape responsible for the incidence instead of the rapist. About three myths were outlined by Cowan (2000) however, one of particular interest to this paper is the belief that men do not have the ability to tame their sexual urges and so women are to be held solely responsible for preventing the occurrence of rape. This drives home a salient point of the presence of inequality which reflects in the gender values orientation handed down from one generation to another in the society which has overtime, become the norm.

The dictionary definition of value orientation describes it as the principles of good and bad, acceptable and unacceptable or right and wrong as accepted by an individual or a social group. Ahn, Hyunkim and Kim (2020) see values orientation as an individual’s goals and guiding principles which reflect in one’s beliefs, attitude, behaviour and norms. Ahn et al (2020) further explain that values orientation develop when certain conditions in the person’s environment approve of his or her values, this then influences subsequent actions in line with those accepted values. Meanwhile, Blackstone (2003) defines gender as a social concept which refers to the denotations, values and qualities people assign to different sexes. From Blackstone (2003) definition, one may deduce that modern society has evolved to the point of viewing the concept ‘gender’ as going beyond biological features, entailing the perspectives and meanings people attribute to it. However, for the purpose of this paper, gender as used implies biological attributes which makes an individual either male or female. Furthermore, gender-value orientation as used in this paper, refers to the various expectations, perspectives, views and values a given society has of male and female individuals, based on the belief system of that society about gender which is traditionally passed on from one member of the society to another. It is the general ideology society has as regards masculinity and femininity which becomes a part and parcel of that society’s culture and traditions. Kagesten, et al (2016) agree with this

assertion, further explaining that gender values are derived from gender norms which dictate varying status, power and opportunities to males and females in accordance to culturally accepted values of masculinity and femininity. These gender norms however, originate from value orientations handed down in a society from one generation to another. Heise et al (2019) also agree with this assertion as they explain that in every society, individuals are covertly and overtly socialized from birth to conform to laid down societally accepted dictates of masculine and feminine behaviours. These value orientations influence most social behaviours of members of that society.

Heise et al (2019) point out that in most societies, value orientations are often ‘patriarchal’ and attach a higher value to masculinity. Such value orientations promote male-dominance and do not allow for equal rights, opportunities and privilege distributions among men and women. Men are the most advantaged in these societies. Hofstede (2011) also raised the issue of gender values orientation, referring to this discourse as masculinity versus femininity which describes certain feminine and masculine traits associated with people’s behaviour and motives. Hofstede (2011) further explained that in various societies, these gender associated values are expressed in two ways- as gender roles and social activities. In terms of gender roles, some societies are skewed towards feminine values, highly prevalent and expressed among both men and women (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). These societies pass on values of modesty, care, liberation or freedom of choice for both men and women. In feminine societies, men freely enter into professions that are traditionally stereotyped as feminine like catering, nursing and secretarial positions, and women also freely take on traditionally masculine professions such as engineering, military positions and the like. Hofstede (2011) stated that the following gender values dominate a feminine society: values involving balance between family and work, values of sympathy for the less privileged and vulnerable members of the society, values that allow women rights to political positions, values that allow for minimum emotional and social role differentiation between men and women, values that give women a say in the home as well as the rights to make certain decisions (especially those regarding reproduction and family size) in the family. However, the opposite is observed in masculine societies as these societies pass down values that restrict women to societally acceptable norms, career values and behaviour (Yamada, 1997).

These societies have values which tilt towards male dominance, competitiveness and self-reliance. Hofstede (2011) described these societies as those that have values which promote maximum emotional and social role differentiation between men and women, in other words, men and women have a clear-cut difference in their emotional and social behaviours. Masculine societies are also characterized by values that promote work over family, values which give high regard to the strong and little or none for the weak and less opportune, values that allow for only a few women to be elected or appointed for political positions, values that permit men to be dictators in the home, most especially in determining family size (Hofstede et al 2010; Hofstede 2011). Drawing from these observations, one could argue that Nigeria seems skewed towards masculinity and value orientations which place the male gender at a more superior position to females. Statistical evidence gathered from the National Bureau of Statistics (2019) gives an insight to this assertion. In its publication, the NBS reported that “women have rarely been represented in any of the three arms of government, as the topmost decision-making body is still dominated by men”. In its analytic report, National Bureau of Statistics (2019) showed that out of a total of 341 ministers the Nation has had between 1999-2015, only 47 women, that is 14% have held ministerial positions while the remaining 294 were men (86%). For gubernatorial positions, statistics reveals that between 1999 and 2015, Nigeria has not had female governors in any of the 36 states in the Federation however a few women have been elected as deputy governors between 2003 and 2015. The reports are not different in the National parliament, the state assemblies, local government council positions, federal judiciary positions and even in the civil and public service decision-making positions (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). These reports are reflections of the gender value orientations of the Nigerian society which is characterized by male dominance and gender inequality.

An ideal society however, characterized by equity and fairness regardless of gender, socio-economic status,

race and ethnicity. It is one where women feel safe, where the vulnerable and less privileged are treated with fairness, consideration and compassion, a society where justice is not denied its members due to their weak social and economic status, where there is security and most of all, one that looks out for the well being of its citizens (Knight, 2017). This implies that in a good society, offenses such as rape should be frowned at and there should be a collective effort by members of that society to curb the problem and also effectively cater for, sympathize with and support through their recovery process, those who are victims of such a traumatic incidence. However, this is hardly the case in the Nigerian society as some researchers have reported high levels of lack of understanding, sympathy and support for victims of rape on the part of society (Dimonye, 2022; Koris et al., 2022). Furthermore, reports reveal that there are various negative attitudes members of the society exhibit towards rape incidences and victims. As indicated by Mittal et al (2017) for instance, there are some myths that surround rape which denies the vulnerability of all women to be victims of this unpleasant circumstance but rather speculates that only immoral women get raped. Mittal et al (2017) further stated that these victims are often blamed as a result of this belief. Other negative attitudes outlined include: stigmatization, lack of support for the victim, justifying, trivializing or normalizing the offence (Abeid et al 2015).

Grubb & Harrower (2008) further explain that negative attitude towards the incidence of rape is more common among women than men. This assertion is also consistent with that of Babatunde et al (2022) who carried out their investigation among University undergraduates in South-West Nigeria. Meanwhile, some other studies including those conducted among University undergraduate populations have reported higher negative attitudes towards the incidence of rape among males than females (Anderson & Quinn, 2009; Mori et al., 1995; Nagel et al., 2005). Szymanski et al., (1993) in their study of male and female college students also reported that male students with gender-value orientation characterized by masculinity have more negative attitude towards the incidence of rape than male students with gender-value orientations with feminine and androgynous attributes. The bigger picture here still remains that these attitudes provide a conducive environment for the offence to thrive. If necessary actions are not taken to curb this problem, it could result in unpleasant consequences in the near future. It is possible that incidences of rape could become even more prevalent in Nigeria, due to negative attitudes expressed in society's failure to hold the rape perpetrators responsible for their abominable actions while emphasizing on where the victim went wrong. The events of the year 2020 provided a 'tip of the iceberg' experience for Nigerians, in terms of the magnitude of this problem, further emphasizing the need for it to be addressed (Aborisade, 2022; Chineyemba, 2022; Dimonye, 2022). Moreover, it is also likely that if this problem persist, Nigerians will no longer feel safe in the society as their rights to living in freedom, peace and safety will be snatched from them by the same society which should protect them. Negative attitudes such as stigmatization will further empower perpetrators of this criminal act in the sense that their victims will be unwilling to speak out for fear of being stigmatized and mistreated by members of the society, thereby sweeping under the carpet the identity of these offenders and the enormity of their crimes. Just as Orjinmo (2021) reports, there are lots of rape suspects roaming freely in the society as victims mostly do not get the justice they deserve due to negative attitude of society towards rape incidences.

Nonetheless, the advent of modernization has brought along with it an agitation for women's rights and a strong campaign to put an end to all forms of ill treatment against women. This campaign has gained recognition especially among International bodies such as the United Nations (Heise, Green, Opper, Stravropoulou, Harper, Nascimento and Zewdie 2019). As a result, there has been efforts to drastically reduce this problem, however, as statistics reveals the problem still persists in Nigeria (National Bureau of Statistic, 2019). Various opinions have ascribed this trend to factors such as illiteracy, economic underdevelopment, culture and belief system (Aborisade, 2022; Mittal et al, 2017; Jayachandran, 2015). This study contributes to the growing efforts National and International organisations in combating the problem of rape through research focused on gender and gender-value orientation, to investigate the influence of these variables on attitude towards the incidence of rape. Studies focusing on attitude towards

the incidence of rape in Nigeria have been conducted using a variety of populations including internally displaced persons, rural communities, children, women and so on, however, only few have investigated the problem among University undergraduates in the region. This study aims at filling this gap as the population under focus is University undergraduates. This paper holds the opinion that the future of any society lies in the strength of its youth population, therefore intervention strategies focused on youths will have long-term effects on the society. Studies in Nigeria have also investigated the problem, establishing its prevalence and causative factors, however, very few seem to proffer intervention strategies or plans which could be put in place to curb the problem in society. This paper intends to fill this gap and also contribute to fight against gender-based violence, rape, negative attitudes towards rape and gender inequality in the Nigerian society by highlighting focal points of intervention for social reform, using counselling as a tool.

In other to achieve its primary objective which is to investigate gender, gender-value orientation and attitude towards the incidence of rape among University undergraduates in Cross River State, this study was guided by three (3) research questions:

1. What is the joint contribution of gender and gender-value orientation on attitude towards incidence of rape?
2. What is the relative contribution of gender and gender-value orientation on attitude towards incidence of rape?
3. What is the moderating effect of gender on the influence of gender-value orientation on attitude towards the incidence of rape?

METHOD

Design

This study adopted a correlational research design. The correlational research design according to Stangor (2011) has to do with the measurement and assessment of the relationship between or among two or more relevant variables. Hence, the choice of this design. Also, this design was used because no manipulation of participants was required and it provides the opportunity to obtain data from a large sample.

Population

The participants of the study were undergraduate students from Universities in Cross River State. Cross River State has three Universities; two public and a private University. From the respective school websites, the first public university had approximately 45000 students while the second had an estimate of 15,000 students. The private institution had about 800 students.

The study included full-time undergraduate students who studied in Universities within Cross River State, while participants who were not full-time undergraduate students in Universities in Cross River State were excluded.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The study employed a 2-stage sampling procedure. In the first stage, two out of the three institutions were purposively selected because they had a higher population compared to the other institution. By purposively selecting two universities with the highest population, a total population of approximately 60,000 students was obtained. The sample size calculation formula by Daniel (1999) yielded a sample size of 382. Considering that the population of the first selected university was about three times that of the second, 382 was divided by 3 and the sample selection was allocated in a 2:1 ratio. The institution with the largest population (255) had a sample size double that of the second institution (127). Therefore, in the second stage

of the sampling procedure, 255 respondents were randomly selected from the first selected university and 127 from the second institution.

Research Instruments

The instruments used for data collection were self-developed by the researchers. The questionnaire has three sections that include (1) the demographic section, (2) Gender Values Orientation Scale, and (3) the Attitude towards the Incidence of Rape Scale. Both scales used had 10 items each. The scales were pilot tested on 50 respondents from the private University as they were not part of the main study. The gender values orientation scale yielded a Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = .710$), while the attitude towards the incidence of rape scale had a Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = .734$). The research instrument was administered using google form due to the Covid-19 prevention protocols which limited students’ physical presence and activities on campuses. The researchers also resorted to the use of google form to ensure their safety during the pandemic.

Table 1. Reliability indices of the gender values orientation scale

Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach’s Alpha of Item Deleted
It is a taboo for the woman to marry more than one husband but a man can marry many wives.	2.4956	1.19349	.326	.705
In the teenage years, attention is focused more on the female than male in the area of home management and household chores.	3.4690	.56680	.369	.691
In times of conflict, the woman is expected to be more tolerant, patient and submissive in marital relationships.	3.2920	.73854	.289	.700
The woman has little or no say in decision making.	1.7699	.80010	.408	.681
The opinion of the man is treated as supreme.	2.7522	.83832	.532	.659
In general conversations and arguments, the woman’s voice lacks recognition.	2.3805	.90744	.418	.679
The consequences of stigmatization are higher on the woman in cases of deviance from moral standards.	2.9823	.74216	.283	.700
The need to maintain a high moral code and chastity is more emphasized on the woman than the man.	3.1770	.70843	.412	.682
It is believed that there are some careers women should not take up as they are better done by men.	2.8142	.92903	.286	.703
Women are least preferred in handling leadership positions but are more preferred for supporting roles.	2.9912	.82726	.456	.673
Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = .710$)				

Table 2. Reliability indices of attitude towards the incidence of rape scale

Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha of Item Deleted
The woman is saddled with the greater responsibility of preventing rape through her dress code and general behaviour.	3.1927	.92559	.206	.744
When a woman is raped, she is blamed for allowing the occurrence of such event.	2.3761	1.00496	.437	.706
People tend to avoid having future marital and courtship relationships with a female victim of rape.	2.5688	.99183	.368	.718
Female victims of rape are often suspected for being responsible in one way or another for the incidence.	2.8716	.85976	.524	.691
Victims of rape are usually stigmatized especially if they are females.	3.1468	.75380	.327	.722
Rape victims are more likely to be females than males.	3.5505	.64381	.400	.714
Most rape victims do not speak out or disclose their own identity for fear of being stigmatized.	3.5963	.57792	.463	.708
Rape victims find it difficult to disclose the rape suspects for fear of stigmatization and shame.	3.3761	.67597	.511	.699
Families of rape victims prevent them from speaking out in order to protect the family's image in the society.	3.1651	.82041	.441	.705
Families of rape victims often blame the victims of destroying family reputation in the society.	2.7339	.97567	.384	.715
Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = .734$)				

Table 3: Correlation Matrix showing the relationship between the dependent variable (attitude towards incidence of rape) and the independent variables (Gender and Gender Value Orientation)

	Attitude Towards Incidence of Rape	Gender	Gender-Value Orientation
Attitude Towards Incidence of Rape	1		
Gender	.160*	1	
Gender Value Orientation	.476**	.029	1

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

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

RESULTS

This study was carried out to investigate the influence of gender and gender value orientation on attitude towards the incidence of rape among University Undergraduates in Cross River State, Nigeria. The participants of this study were undergraduate students in two public Universities in Cross River State. The sample for the study was 382 students, however 225 students submitted their responses on the google form. Of the 225 participants, 65.5% were males and 34.5% were females. In terms of the age distribution of participants, 15% indicated ages below 20 years, 68.1% indicated being between ages 21-30 years, 13.3% stated they were between 31-40 years old, 2.7% indicated 41-50 years, while 0.9% stated they were above 50 years old. The marital status of respondents indicates that the majority were single (91.1%) while 8.9% were married. Also, majority of students who participated in the study were undergraduates of the first selected University which accounted for 86.7%, while 13.3% were undergraduates of the second University. Ethnic background of participants also indicates that 31.9% participants were non-indigenes of Cross River State who schooled in the State while 68.1% were indigenous students from different Local Government Areas of Cross River State.

Research Question 1: What is the joint contribution of gender and gender value orientation on attitude towards incidence of rape?

Table 4: Regression summary showing the joint contribution of gender and gender value orientation on attitude towards rape

R = .493^a Adj R Square = .236

R Square = .243 Std. Error of the Estimate = 3.89306

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1085.405	2	542.703	35.808	.000 ^b
	Residual	3379.769	223	15.156		
	Total	4465.174	225			

Table 4 reveals that gender and gender value orientations had a significant joint contribution on attitude towards the incidence rape ($R^2 = .493$, $p < .05$, $F(2,223) = 35.81$). The Adjusted R Square ($Adj R^2 = .236$) implies that when gender (male) and gender value orientation are combined, they accounted for 23.6% variation in attitude towards rape. Variables accountable for the remaining variations were not involved in this study.

Research question 2: What is the relative contribution of gender and gender value orientation on attitude towards rape?

Table 5: Regression summary showing the relative contributions of gender and gender value orientation on attitude towards rape

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	17.784	1.688		10.536	.000
	Gender=Male	-1.338	.545	-.143	-2.455	.015
	Gender values orientation	.471	.059	.468	8.025	.000

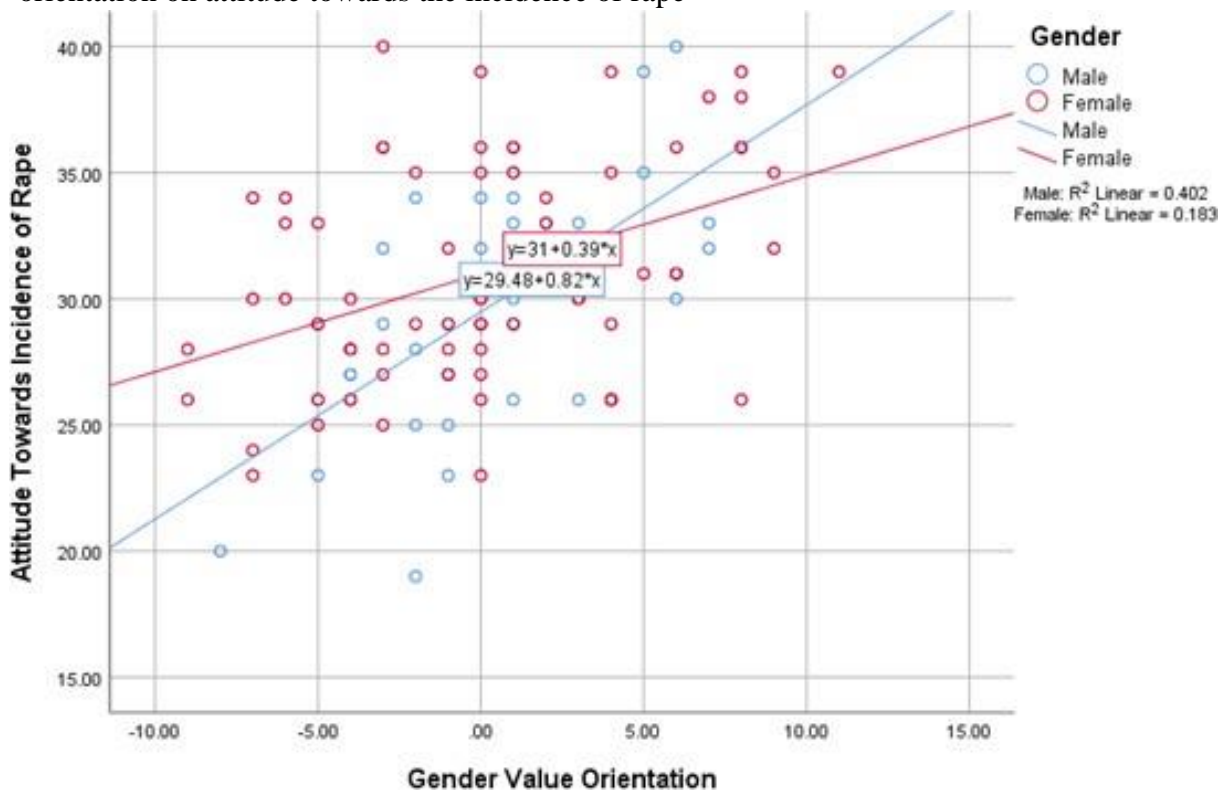
Table 5 shows that both gender (Male) ($\beta = -1.338$; $t = -2.455$, $p < .05$) and Gender value orientation ($\beta = .471$; $t = 8.025$, $p < .05$) had significant relative effects on attitude towards the incidence of rape. This implies that compared to the female gender, being a male reduces the attitude towards incidences of rape by more than one time while a unit increase in gender values orientation would result in a 47.1% increase in attitude towards the incidences of rape.

Table 6: Moderated regression summary showing the moderating effect of gender on the influence of gender values orientation on attitude towards the incidence of rape

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.493 ^a	.243	.236	3.89306	.243	35.808	2	223	.000
2	.516 ^b	.266	.256	3.84288	.023	6.862	1	222	.009

Table 6 above shows that there is a significant moderating effect of gender on the influence of gender value orientation on the attitude towards the incidence of rape (R Square Change = .023; F change (1,222) = 6.862, $p < 0.05$). The change in R square (.023) indicated that there is a 2.3% percentage increase in the variation explained by the addition of the interaction term. Consequently, it can be concluded that gender moderates the influence of gender values orientation on attitudes towards the incidence of rape.

Graph 1. Regression slopes showing the moderating effect of gender on the influence of gender values orientation on attitude towards the incidence of rape



DISCUSSION

The main aim of the study was to find out the influence of gender and gender value orientation on attitude towards the incidence of rape among University undergraduates. The result of the study revealed that there is a significant joint contribution of gender and gender value orientation on attitude towards the incidence of rape. This implies that when both independent variables (gender and gender value orientation) are

combined, they would account for 24.3% variation in attitudes towards the incidence of rape.

Further analysis revealed that the independent variables both had significant relative contributions on attitude towards the incidence of rape. It was observed that male respondents are about one time less likely to have negative attitudes towards rape incidences compared to their female counterparts. It can thus be inferred that males have lesser negative attitude towards the incidence of rape than their female counterparts. This implies that concerning rape incidences, males have more reasonable views and attitude than their female counterparts. This finding is consistent with those of Babatunde & Falaye, (2022); Mittal et al, (2017) who also reported that compared to male respondents, females have more negative attitude towards rape incidences, and inconsistent with (Mori et al., 1995; Nagel et al., 2005). Considering the patriarchal nature of the value orientations which dominate the setting where the current study was carried out, the female child is raised to perceive herself as a lesser being who should be subject to masculine authority. Thus, women are expected to be more conforming than men, which is no surprise why women will be more critical about rape incidences than men. Value orientations also enforce the greater responsibility for moral chastity on women than men, thus women are likely to be more concerned than their male counterparts, with critically considering what rape victims did or failed to do which led to the rape incidences rather than being sympathetic and supportive.

The lesser negative attitude of the male students on the other hand could be related to the growing campaign against incidences of rape and women's right movements gaining much recognition in modern day societies. It could be that the growing awareness on the need for equal rights for men and women is changing the narrative, making men to critically reconsider the traditional beliefs of inequality which have long been promoted in society. Also, the fact that most men would not want to at least publicly support such heinous act, even if some of them would secretly subscribe to it or empathize with the male perpetrators of rape incidences because they know that the society would frown at it due to modern trends could be another explanation for the difference in attitude towards rape incidences in men.

In addition, it was observed that gender significantly moderates the influence of gender value orientation on attitude towards incidence of rape. Using a moderated regression analysis, it was observed that the introduction of an interaction term produced a significant change in the contribution of the independent variables. This implies that being a male or female has different effect on the influence of the gender value orientation on attitude towards incidence of rape. Despite the significant implications of this study's findings for informing social change, there are specific limitations that should be considered. Firstly, the study is limited by the small sample size used. Secondly, there is potential bias due to a gender imbalance in the distribution of respondents, with 65% male and 34.5% female participants. In conclusion, while the findings of this study have important implications for informing social change, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations that exist. The small sample size and potential bias due to gender imbalance in respondent distribution should be taken into account when interpreting the results. Future research with larger and more diverse samples can help validate and expand upon these findings, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the topic at hand.

IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING TOWARDS SOCIAL REFORM

In this era characterised by rapid changes and adjustments to accommodate the new normal, the Nigerian society should not be left behind. Social reform is of importance now more than ever and will only be possible through a collective effort of individuals and various institutions which are part and parcel of the society, meaning, everyone has a role to play. It is on this base that the following implications for social reform are outlined:

1. The government should revisit social policies to include those which promote adequate support, care

and assistance for victims of rape. These policies should be effectively implemented and agencies that would oversee the continuous monitoring and evaluation of these policies should be set up to enhance their effectiveness.

2. Government parastatals in charge of curriculum development should modify the curriculum to include subjects that address gender inequality issues. These subjects should be made compulsory at all levels of education to re-orientate the value system of students.
3. Government should also create more women empowerment programmes. More opportunities focused on encouraging girl-child education mostly in rural communities, providing career development, skill acquisition and skill empowerment platforms for women should be created. This would encourage women to come out of their shells and make meaningful contributions in the society.
4. Government and other organisations should provide more juicy and attractive scholarship opportunities that are aimed at encouraging women to go into academic fields that are traditionally considered as being masculine.
5. Both public and private schools should organize symposia for students to address the issue of rape and also educate them on the need to show positive attitudes such as care, support and warmth to victims of rape, having the mindset that it could happen to anyone.
6. Media agencies (both public and private) should develop campaign programmes that would create awareness on rape and educate members of the public on the need to show positive attitudes towards rape victims. Media can also give a voice to these victims by providing platforms where they can share their experiences freely without being blamed and condemned.
7. Parents should also place a responsibility on themselves to instill pro-social values in their children, teaching them to show genuine concern for others who are vulnerable in the society. This can be achieved by modeling these behaviours for the children to see and will have a long term effect on the society as these values will in the long run replace the negative ones.
8. Religious organisations especially those within campuses should create awareness among members on the need to have positive attitudes towards victims of rape. Gender equality should also be promoted within the religious platforms.

Counsellors have more enormous roles to play, however, the following are highlighted:

1. Counselling professionals should work hand in hand with medical personnels and health service providers who handle cases of rape so that victims do not only receive medical attention but will also be given treatments and interventions that will effectively treat, prevent or manage psychological problems that may result from their traumatic experience, thereby ensuring full recovery both physically and psychologically.
2. Counsellors should work together with the police department and prison services to ensure that perpetrators of rape are also assisted. Reformatory counselling and other required intervention packages should be provided for these misfits. Also, upon their release into the society after serving their sentences, counselling professionals should be attached to them for follow-up so as to avoid recidivism and to help them fit into the society and make useful contributions.
3. Support groups should be created for victims of rape. This will remove feelings of fear and isolation, encourage them to speak out and come to terms with their experiences.
4. Family counselling should also be provided for victims and their families to help prevent any problems that may arise from their negative experiences.

CONCLUSION

This study attempted mainly to investigate the influence of gender and gender value orientation on attitude towards the incidence of rape. The study revealed a joint contribution of gender and gender value orientation on attitude towards the incidence of rape. There is also a relative effect of gender and gender value

orientation on attitude towards the incidence of rape as it was indicated in the result of the study that being a male reduces the attitude towards incidences of rape by more than one time while a unit increase in gender values orientation would result in a 47.1% increase in attitude towards the incidences of rape. Gender was also found to significantly moderate the influence of gender value orientation on attitude towards the incidence of rape. The researchers therefore conclude that efforts made to re-orientate members of the society will improve attitudes people display toward victims of this unpleasant circumstance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Government through the Ministry for Women Affairs, in collaboration with other organisations concerned with women's rights at the National and International level should come up with more initiatives and programmes aimed at creating awareness on rape, its effects and the need to show positive and supportive attitude towards victims of rape. The members of the society need to be re-orientated on the issue of rape, to erase the existing attitude people have towards the occurrence of the problem. Programmes and initiatives invested in educating the public and advocating for empathy and support for victims of the incidence will go a long way in re-adjusting the attitude towards the problem. Campaigns should also be done in partnership with the Counselling Association of Nigeria, to encourage people to make use of counselling facilities in the occurrence of rape.
2. Creation and implementation of policies that will promote gender equality and support for victims of rape will also help ameliorate the problem. Social reform is possible if laws and policies are put in place and effectively implemented. When policy makers pay a blind eye to social issues like rape, it passes a silent message of approval. It is therefore recommended that policies that allow for provision of effective legal, medical, psychological and social support to victims of rape incidences should be made and implemented. This paper also emphasizes that counselling should be considered as an effective tool for psychological intervention for rape victims. Policy makers should also consider developing and implementing policies which provide adequate and easy access to counselling facilities for issues victims, their families and others involved in the incidence.
3. There is need for enlightened members of the society and educational institutions within the society to put in a collective effort towards social reform. Through education, a re-orientation is possible. Enlightened members of the public can use their various spheres of influence as platforms to push for social change. Institutions of learning at all levels can also work in collaboration with the Ministry of Education to restructure the school curriculum, with the aim of infusing courses that will enlighten students towards social values which foster equity and fairness. Counselling units in schools can also launch informative sessions to enhance the social attitude of students towards social issues.

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