

Effect of Islamic Counselling on Stigma among Rape Victims in Kano State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examined the effect of Islamic Counselling on stigma among rape victims in Kano State, Nigeria. The main objective is to examine the effect of Islamic counselling on stigma among rape victims in Kano State, Nigeria, with three research questions and three hypotheses. Quasi-experimental research design was used. Population of the study are 20 rape victims and all were used as sampling using purposive sampling technique. Researcher made questionnaire was used named Scale on Stigma among Rape Victims (SS-RV). Cronbach's Alpha was used to find the reliability index of 0.82. Percentage and frequency were used to analyze the differences in age and gender, t-test was used to analyze the data to answer the research questions and hypotheses. Major finding from the study include stigma has effect on rape victims in Kano State, Nigeria which was reduced with Islamic Counselling. And the major recommendation from the study include Islamic counselling to be accepted and applied as continuous counselling approach for rape victims. It has been observed to be an effective approach when properly implemented especially by professional counsellors and Islamic preachers. Thus, many people can benefit from its contributive value.

Keywords: Stigma, Rape, Islamic Counselling, Rape Victims

1. INTRODUCTION

There has been growing concern over the rampant incidences of rape nationwide. This is because of its devastating social and psychological consequences on the victims which may include posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, substance abuse, absence of sexual desire and social phobia. Coupled with this is the issue of societal stigma and rejection which the victims suffer. It is the stigma and rejection that usually silence the victims, leaving them isolated, dejected and even vulnerable to suicide. In a society where the worth of a girl is her virginity, the victim's psychological sufferings are often secondary compared to the disgrace and frustration of stigma. Victims cannot open up and talk about the crime due to the stigma that surrounds their plight, as it is mostly assumed that for a victim to be stigmatized, the story must be known implying that she must have shared the crime information with someone. They therefore in most cases do not disclose their fate even to their families and friends for fear of negative reactions from them. But staying silent has served as a catalyst to impunity for the perpetrators and this has led to the exponential increase of the crime. Worse still, the perpetrators are never known and brought to justice. Another implication of the silence is that victims never go for support-seeking to mitigate the negative effects of the rape.

The impact of stigma by far out-weighs all other negative effects of the crime as it may even result to educational or economic barrier and other social disadvantages. The stigmatization however is purely cultural and has no roots in Islam. As far as Islam is concerned, rape victims should not be ostracized for a crime committed against them. Instead, rape victims should be given proper physical, mental, and emotional support for rehabilitation. It is against this background that the researchers decided to conduct a research to find out the effect of Islamic counselling on rape victims towards stigma, how to overcome it and how to properly handle the situation.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Rape is a sad social problem that has recently been on increase all over the world. In Kano State, over 4000 cases of sexual violence were documented and still counting cases of sexual violence mostly

against young children below the age of 13 years. In many circumstances, victims are left with the problems of perpetual flashback with psychological defect, as it is normal for human beings to reflect on issues done in the past. There is therefore the predisposition for any victim of rape to recall the bad ordeal of the incident, which might render the victim in permanent traumatized confusion if not properly counselled. According to Kehinde, Austin, & Taiwo (2014), the victim may feel perplexed to the extent that the thinking and thought of such a victim will be affected negatively if not properly handled and guided. The problem of societal stigma created by the menace of the act of rape on the victims is sometime more painful than the rape itself, and may even affect the victims negatively than the act itself. This therefore calls for a study to find out an effective counselling approach that will mitigate the effect of the stigma on the victims. The researchers have decided to conduct the study on the effect of Islamic counselling approach on stigma the area of study, Kano being a state populated by Muslims.

1.2. Objective of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the effect of Islamic counselling on stigma among rape victims in Kano State, Nigeria;
2. To identify the difference in effect of stigma among rape victims with regards to age, and
3. To identify the difference in effect of stigma among rape victims with regards to gender.

1.3. Research Questions

1. What is the effect of Islamic counselling on stigma among rape victims in Kano State, Nigeria?
2. What is the effect of stigma among rape victims with regards to age?
3. What is the effect of stigma among rape victims with regards to gender?

1.4. Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the effect of Islamic counselling on stigma among rape victims in Kano State;
2. There is no significant difference in effect of stigma among rape victims with regards to age, and
3. There is no significant difference in effect of stigma among rape victims with regards to gender.

2. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Concept of Counselling

Counselling according to the Malaysian Board of Counsellors is defined as a systematic procedure based on psychological concepts that must be carried out by licensed counsellors in line with the Counselling code of ethics. This description is also in line with the American Association of Counsellors (ACA), which defines counselling as a professional relationship that helps people, families, and groups grow in order to achieve their objectives for a successful life, mental health, personal well-being, regaining sense of hopefulness of self-value after stigma, education, as well as career. Counselling service is a strategy that can assist people in building their own resilience (Khalid 2017), and is seen as a professional relationship based on mutual respect between a counsellor and a client. Providing a comprehensive transformation, development, and adjustment are therefore the goals of counselling,

Individuals facing emotional despair and perpetual trauma problems tend to have feelings of bleakness and poor self-image because they feel that they do not have the opportunity to change and start a better life due to lack of support system from society which may be as a result of stigmatization from parents, peers and the environment. This attitude of despair and fear of change and uncertainty as well as insecurity with the immediate society becomes an obstacle to the building of resilience in the individual. The high need for a system of support, acceptance, assistance, and guidance indicates

that individuals need other individuals to express their problems and help them to find the best solutions. Therefore, the role of the counsellors as listeners, mentors and source of support in counselling sessions cannot be over emphasized.

2.2. Concept of Rape

Rape can be looked upon as a kind of sexual assault usually involving sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual penetration, perpetrated against a person without that person's consent. Many people perceive rape from different interpretations and perspectives. There exists a legal, clinical, cultural and political notions of the concept of rape. According to WHO (2002), rape is defined as any form of sexual assault on a person, which is a heinous act performed when one party wishes to exact complete power and control over another. The Rape Abuse and Incest National Network also sees rape as forced sexual intercourse, including vaginal, anal, or oral penetration. Penetration may be by a body part or an object. (Tracy, 2021).

2.3. Concept of Social Stigma

Stigma has to do with negative outlook or feeling held about someone or a mark of shame or disgrace associated with particular circumstances under which an individual has undergone through. The term can also be seen as stereotypes or negative views ascribed to a person or groups of people when their characteristics or behaviors are viewed as contrary or different from societal norms. Kennedy and Prock (2016) defines social stigma as the negative connotations, example, badness, shame, and guilt, that are communicated to a victim around certain experiences and that become incorporated into the victim's self-image. These negative meanings are communicated in many ways. They can come directly from the abuser, who may blame the victim for the activity, demean the victim, or furtively convey a sense of shame about the behavior, and it can also come from other members of the society.

Stigma as a negative connotation against someone or group of people might be of different types, sometimes the sources of stigmatization can come from the victim, his family or immediate community. The World Vision United Kingdom (2016) has classified the types of stigma as Self-imposed Stigma, Familial Stigma, Community Stigma, and Stigma by Association.

2.4. Islamic Perspective of Counselling

Generally speaking, counselling is principally concerned with the well-being of the mental health of an individual. The objectives of counselling as stated by Corey (2013) is the modification of an individual's thought, feelings and behavior. Globally, there has been a rise in both public and governmental awareness of mental health concerns. Psychological and mental well-being are correlated with good mental health. The World Organization of Health (2018) promotes mental health well-being, prevents mental illnesses, defends human rights, and provides care for those who are impacted by mental disorders as part of its efforts to enhance the mental health of both individuals and society as a whole. Additionally, it is mentioned that the load of mental illnesses is still rising across the world with serious consequences for both the health, social, human rights, and economic ramifications in every nation on the planet. Islam as a religion that encompasses all spheres of human life, has a comprehensive process of delivery of psychotherapist counselling among people that are Muslims in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Islamic counselling is the activity of counsellors towards providing guidance, lessons, and guidelines to individuals who ask for guidance in terms of how counsellors must be able to develop the potential of their mind, soul, and faith and be able to face their life problems properly and correctly in accordance with the paradigms of the Qur'an and Sunnah (Mierrina, Erica, Febriyanti, Tri &Egalita, 2022). Islamic psychotherapy is therefore a process of response as a therapeutic approach in meeting the changing psychosocial and mental health needs of the Muslim clients. The notion of this approach is the understanding of the nature of human beings which integrates devoutness into the therapeutic process. In addition to this, the roles of the Muslim counsellors are closely connected to their goal in life, personality and characters. Their concern is to help their clients in attaining the psychological stability and well-being and making a big impact to the client's current and future life.

According to Zakaria & Akhir (2016), Islamic Counselling can be categorized into three different dimensions; Traditional, Modification and Integrative dimensions. From the traditional approach to counselling, this is referred to as the psychological advice and wisdom practiced by Prophet

Muhammad or Islamic advice system, based on Islamic theology. In the Modification dimension, Islamic counselling is similar to orthodox Counselling, with Islamic elements of beliefs and practices embedded in the philosophy and intervention strategies. However, the integrative dimension stands as a counselling with an integration of main aspects in predictable Counselling with the fundamental aspects in Islam involving faith, worship, and guidance. What makes Islamic counselling unique is its techniques in counselling which include prayer, Qur'anic recitation, forgiveness, empathy, remembrance of Allah, and many others. These can be used on their own or in combination with other conventional techniques.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Diwan-al Hisba Model of Islamic Counselling

The idea of counselling has been existing in Islam since the time of the holy Prophet (saw). The concept is referred to as *Nasiha* (counselling) which in Arabic language has to do with understanding the true scenario upon which an individual found himself in order to render him a spiritual Counselling for one to come back to state of contentment in whatever the magnitude of his/her predicament appears to be. As stated, the principle under which the effectiveness is fully achieved by the ability of the Islamic Counsellors to understand the general situation under which the client is and at the same time be equipped with ample knowledge of Qur'an and tradition of the Holy prophet to the extent that he can win the general psychology of the client by leading to the full remembrance of Allah as Savior, Provider as well as Cherisher of everything. The bases that satisfied the success of the general Counselling in Islam from the side of the client is his possession of no matter how little the spirit of consciousness of God (Allah) and believing in His Omnipotence and Omnipresence.

It was in the time of the second Caliph Umar bn Al- Khattab that the upgrade of the process of *Nasiha* to Diwan-al Hisba was made. This involved the process under which all the activities and procedures were institutionalized and made a state responsibility. This model is in line with critical Counselling of female rape victims with Islamic socio-cultural background. Part of the glad tidings to the rape victims in respect to the spiritual status of the victim is that the tradition of the Qur'anic teaching and hadith is Allah (SWT) will not hold the victim of any sinful act that one was made to commit on duress accountable.

3.2. Review of Empirical Studies

A research conducted by Shemetra (2018) on the effect of forgiveness, which is one of the Islamic counselling techniques, in overcoming rape trauma on the victims proved that practicing forgiveness by the victims can benefit them. It identified five key areas where forgiveness can benefit the victims. These are;

- i. It allows them to let go of the hurt and pain;
- ii. It is for their benefit and not for that of the perpetrators;
- iii. It relieves them from experiencing anger and other negative emotions;
- iv. It shifts the victims' views from being victims to survivors, and
- v. It empowers them to show empathy towards others.

Another study conducted by Owens, Rasool, Bernstein, Latif, Aboul-Enein (2022) titled, 'Intervention using the Qur'an to Promote Mental Health: A Systematic Scoping Review' which involved quasi-experimental, longitudinal, cross-sectional and qualitative studies in English, French, or Arabic; Adults ≥ 18 years, Pregnant females attaining marriageable age ≥ 14 . The studies focusing on the Qur'an, hadith and/or Sunnah as a primary mental health intervention or Studies focusing on the Qur'an, hadith and/or Sunnah as an additional form of therapy for mental health interventions. Exclusion criteria: Commentaries, narratives, editorial communications, opinion pieces, conference papers, government reports, guidance documents, book reviews, theses and dissertations, systematic, scoping, rapid and literature reviews, case studies; evidence in languages other than English, French or Arabic; Other types of studies focusing on children or adolescents; Studies excluding interventions using the Qur'an, hadith or sunnah or failing to differentiate between these areas and other interventions; Studies mentioning Qur'an, hadith or sunnah as an afterthought in the discussion.

Finally, it was revealed that, there are some evidences indicating that religious involvement generally correlates with better mental health for depression patient, a limited amount of evidence for stress-related disorders was recorded.

In a meta-analytical study of qualitative type conducted by Siregar (2020) on Islamic Counselling in a Philosophy Perspective in north Sumatra University, the consulted reviewed articles from the libraries revealed that the material object of Islamic Counselling philosophy is the same as the object of philosophy in general, namely everything that exists. Everything that exists includes "things that are visible" and "things that are not visible". Here it means, the essence of the Islamic counselling is to achieve a general overcoming behavioral and emotional status of counsellee (client) and at the same time increase his sense of consciousness with Allah and achieving this determines the effectiveness of Islamic counselling approach.

4. METHODOLOGY

Quasi experimental design was used. The population of the study was 20 and the sample too was 20 using purposive sampling technique. Researcher made questionnaire was used to collect data. Cronbach’s Alpha was used to test the reliability index and is 0.82. Pre-test post-test was done in order to get the results. Percentage and frequency were used to analyze the differences in age and gender, t-test was used to analyze the data to answer the research questions and hypothesis.

Table1. Age distribution of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-10 years	6	30.0	30.0	30.0
	11-15 years	10	50.0	50.0	80.0
	16-20 years	4	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field study, 2024

Table 1 shows the age distribution of the respondents, 0-10years with frequency of 6(30%), 11-15years with frequency of 10(50%) and 16-20years with frequency of 4 (20%).

Table2. Gender of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	6	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Female	14	70.0	70.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Study, 2024

Table 2 shows the gender of the respondents. Male have a frequency of 6 (30%) and female with frequency of 14 (70%).

Table3. Effect of Stigma on Rape Victims in Kano State, Nigeria

Treatment	Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	T	P
Stigma	Pre-test	20	3.635	0.491608	19	11.8902	.000
	Post-test	20	1.87	0.550196			

Source: Field Study, 2024

Table 3 shows the effect of stigma on rape victims, which the pre-test has the mean 3.64 (SD: 0.49) and post-test with the mean 1.87 (SD: 0.55). The t value is 11.89 which is greater that the P value (0.000), which answer the research question one showing that stigma has effect on rape victims but was reduced with Islamic counselling.

Table4. Effect of Stigma among Rape Victims with regards to Age difference in Kano State, Nigeria

Treatment	Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	T	P
Stigma Based on Age	Pre-test	20	3.64889	0.457334	17	21.3204	0.0367
	Post-test	20	1.89111	0.493439			

Source: Field Study, 2024

Table 4 shows the effect of stigma among rape victims with regards to age difference. The pre-test has mean of 3.65 (SD: 0.46) and post-test with the mean of 1.89 (SD:0.49). The t value is 21.32 which is greater than P value 0.037. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, there is significant difference on the effect of stigma among rape victims based on age.

Table5. *Effect of Stigma among Rape Victims with regards to Gender difference in Kano State, Nigeria*

Treatment	Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	T	P
Stigma Based on Gender	Pre-test	20	3.59643	0.507931	18	17.2251	0.0038
	Post-test	20	1.85952	0.541304			

Source: *Field Study, 2024*

Table 5 shows the effect of stigma among rape victims with regards to gender difference. The pre-test has mean of 3.60 (SD: 0.51) and post-test with the mean of 1.86 (SD:0.54). The t value is 17.23 which is greater than P value 0.038. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, there is significant difference on the effect of stigma among rape victims based on gender.

5. MAJOR FINDINGS

The major findings from this study are:

1. Stigma has effect on rape victims in Kano State, Nigeria which was reduced with Islamic Counselling.
2. There is significant difference on the effect of stigma among rape victims based on age in Kano State, Nigeria.
3. There is significant difference on the effect of stigma among rape victims based on gender in Kano State, Nigeria.

6. DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this research have proven that there is a significant effect of stigma on rape victims in Kano State just like in other regions world over. This confirmed earlier studies that were conducted on the effect of stigma on rape victims. But Islamic counselling approach has demonstrated to have a significant effect on overcoming the effect of stigma-related issues. Islam teaches Muslims that whatever befalls a person is from Allah and therefore the intervention for that affliction should be sought through Allah. The Qur’an has said, “Allah’s words are most effective and natural ways of guidance that the Creator gives to His creation, both directly through the Qur’an and indirectly through the living example of the Prophet (saw) and other rightly guided individuals. The Qur’an has said, “Those who believe and whose hearts are set at rest by the remembrance of Allah, now surely by Allah’s remembrance are hearts set at rest” (Q13: 28). The Qur’an has also said, “The Qur’an, Sunnah, prayers, remembrance of Allah, and so on are therefore sources of support and success. And most times affliction befell on individual not as a punishment but for Allah to test their strength of faith (*iman*). The purpose of the distress and affliction may be in order to strengthen their trust and reliance on Allah. The Qur’an has said, “And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to those who patiently persevere. Those who when any affliction befalls them, they say, “verily, we belong to Allah, and it is to Him that we return” (Q2: 155 – 156). The Qur’an then explains to the Muslims that after hardship comes ease, “So surely with hardship comes ease” (Q94: 5)

The findings also indicate a significant difference in effects of stigma based on gender. This is also natural as it is a well-known fact that even though both sexes (men and women) are equal in terms of humanity and before the sight of Allah, generally speaking, their physical structure and emotional dispositions are not the same. Men have been created to be stronger than women in terms of physical strength and emotional dispositions, since they are maintainers and protectors of women as indicated by the Qur’an. The Qur’an has said, “Men are protectors and maintainers of women because Allah has made one of them excel over the other...” (Q4: 34). Women, on the other hand are, in most cases are emotionally weak. This will naturally intensify the effect of the stigma on them more than their male counterpart.

Likewise, the last finding which indicates that there is significant difference in effects based on age is also natural. Matured or older victims are more likely to experience the effects of stigmatization than younger victims that do not care on what the people or society say about them

7. CONCLUSION

Based on the Islamic guidance and counselling assistance that has been carried out in Hisbah boards and community settings to reduce the effect of the stigma among rape victims, this research has provided evidence that Islamic Counselling had significant effect towards reducing the effect of stigma among rape victims in Kano State, Nigeria. Culture and societal stigma play a vital role and sometimes worsen the situation, that's why many parents of the victims cover up and keep quiet about the issue. Therefore, it is important that counsellors should continue practice Quran and hadith skills through writing, counting, and reading.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Base on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Islamic counselling shall be accepted and applied as continuous counselling approach for rape victims. It has been observed to be an effective approach when properly implemented especially by professional counsellors and Islamic preachers. Thus, many people can benefit from its contributive value.
2. Government to established special centers for sexual violence cases to enhance the fight against sexual assault and gender-based violence.
3. Parents particularly mothers need to educate their female daughters on sex education.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

Yusuf Maitama Sule University,
Kano State,
Nigeria,

Dear Participant,

We are researchers from the above-mentioned University conducting research on the Effects of Islamic Counselling on Stigma among Rape Victims in Kano State, Nigeria. You are pleased requested to provide your honest response to the questionnaire. Your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for the research purpose only.

Thank you,

Prof. Aisha Garba Habib

Hafsat Sani Chindo

Maryam Ali Muhammad

SCALE ON STIGMA AMONG RAPE VICTIMS (SS-RV)

Demographic Information:

1. Gender/Sex: Male Female
2. Age: 0 – 10years 11 – 15years 16 – 20years 21 – 25years 26 – 30years

Items

Please tick the most appropriate answer. The options are: 4. Always, 3. Sometimes, 2. Rarely, 1. Never.

	Items on Stigma				
1	I like isolating myself, not mingling with people				
2	It is difficult for me to discuss what happened				
3	People respect me less because of what happened				
4	I am worried because people blame me for what happened				
5	People told me that I could have done something to prevent the incident from happening				
6	I feel like committing suicide because of people’s rejection				
7	People tend to avoid interacting with me				
8	I feel badly treated by family and community members				
9	People make inappropriate and insensitive remarks about my experience				
10	I feel ashamed that I have to run away from home				

Source: *Researcher Made, 2024*

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