



PUBLIC AWARENESS, UTILISATION AND SATISFACTION WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIES IN CURBING INTIMATE



PARTNER VIOLENCE IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) has been recognized as a social and public health problem that has necessitated agencies' intervention within the Criminal Justice System (CJS). Globally, many nations now respond to the menace of intimate partner violence by engaging the police and special courts' services through the enactment of laws prohibiting acts of physical, sexual, verbal, economic, and psychological violence. In 2014, Lagos State established within its police force the family support unit, which caters to cases of violence within intimate relationships. This move followed poor enforcement of the 2007 Lagos State Domestic Violence bill. Despite these provisions, Lagos State continues to report a high incidence of intimate partner violence (IPV). However, awareness of the mechanisms used by the Criminal Justice System (CJS) to address this violence is important for achieving the desired result. The objectives of the article include the identification of law enforcement strategies used in combating IPV; the awareness of the public on such strategies and the level of satisfaction derived by those who engaged Law enforcement in the report of IPV. Using the purposive sampling technique, 400 survey questionnaires were administered, and 383 were retrieved and analysed using univariate and bivariate procedures. The results revealed that the majority of respondents were aware of the police strategies being utilised, although satisfaction levels varied. The study concluded that challenges hindering the effective use of the police in IPV cases should be addressed, as the public is aware of their strategies. The study recommended that funds be made available, especially to stakeholder agencies, to further sensitise various groups within society.

Keywords: Intimate Partner Violence, Lagos, Law enforcement, Public awareness, Procedural justice, Utilisation.

Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) refers to harmful actions that occur within a relationship, including physical, sexual, verbal, economic, and psychological abuse. Although such violence can be initiated by either partner, evidence shows that women are disproportionately affected and represent the majority of victims (Kumagai, 2016). According to global estimates, one in every three women (approximately 35 percent) has experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner at some point in her relationship or lifetime (World Health Organization, 2017). The consequences are often fatal, with up to 38 percent of murdered women worldwide losing their lives as a result of abuse committed by a partner (World Health Organization, 2013).

The scale of the problem is evident across different regions. In Russia, for instance, an estimated 12,000 women die each year due to intimate partner violence. In Pakistan, around 80 percent of women are reported to be victims, while in Bangladesh nearly half of all women face rape, assault, or even murder at the hands of their husbands (Adebayo, 2014). Although women remain disproportionately affected, men are also increasingly recognised as survivors of intimate partner violence. Studies highlight a growing number of male victims (Dutton & White, 2013; U.K. Guardian, 2010). In the United Kingdom, arrests of women for perpetrating intimate violence rose from 1,575 in 2005 to 4,266 in 2009. Between 2004–2009, nearly 40 percent of victims of intimate partner violence were men, and in 2006–2007, 43.4 percent of those subjected to partner harassment were male (British Crime Survey and Home Office Statistical Bulletin, 2010). In the United States, the prevalence is similarly striking, with an estimated 3.2 million men identified as victims of intimate partner violence (Omilusi, 2017).

The violence of any form is a crime and requires the attention and intervention of society and the criminal justice system. A country's Law is put in place for the benefit of the citizens, and when such citizens cannot rely on the Law to protect and get them justice, then it is bothersome and worrisome. The menace of intimate partner violence remains of significant importance, with police and legal response becoming essential in addressing the issue. It is imperative to recognise the continuous difficulties that are encountered when dealing with this type of violence. Victims' reluctance to report abuse indicates that a significant number of these crime goes unreported, even though it is visible in the routine work of the police, social services, and casualty departments (Walklate et al., 2018). Many nations now respond to

cases of intimate partner violence as a health and social problem that requires a legal solution. In times past, there was a significant reluctance in addressing this problem because the government, through agencies within the criminal justice system, saw interference as meddling into private family matters. In instances where it was given any form of attention, it was categorised as a family law matter. With growing international and national awareness of intimate partner violence, the establishment of IPV awareness month, creating special units within the police force to address IPV cases, and using the Law to respond to the problem have all gained recognition.

Most countries resorted to using or applying criminal assault laws as there were no pre-existing laws to tackle or address cases of intimate partner violence. The Nigerian Criminal Law has not made provision for violence within relationships. Instead, there is a general law (VAPP Act, 2015) against perpetrating violence, and perpetrators get away with intimate partner violence because of the lack of clear-cut legal provision that directly addresses such behaviour.

By the end of the twentieth century, violence within domestic and intimate relationships had begun to be formally recognised as a crime in many Western nations. This development justified the involvement of the criminal justice system, given the gravity of the issue and the need to ensure justice and protection for all members of society through established processes of conviction, punishment, and rehabilitation (Dada, Dosunmu, & Oyedele, 2015; Messing, Ward-Lasher, Thaller, & Bagwell-Grey, 2015). As awareness of the consequences of IPV increased both nationally and internationally, legal responses gained greater recognition. In the absence of specific legislation addressing such cases, many countries initially relied on general criminal assault laws. Bringing perpetrators of intimate partner violence to justice has since become a central priority, not only to safeguard survivors but also to protect children and promote the well-being of society as a whole.

Yet, despite these developments, significant challenges remain in contexts such as Lagos State, Nigeria, where public awareness of IPV, the utilisation of law enforcement strategies, and satisfaction with the justice system are often limited. This gap between legal provisions and their effective implementation highlights the need to critically examine how communities engage with law enforcement mechanisms in curbing intimate partner violence. Accordingly, this study seeks to address these pressing concerns.

Literature Review

Research has identified a range of factors that may contribute to the risk of experiencing or perpetrating intimate partner violence. For example, Ahmad, Riaz, Barata, and Stewart (2004) and Baloyi (2013) argue that patriarchal ideology often legitimises male domination over women. Within such contexts, women themselves may internalise and adhere to patriarchal norms and values, sometimes accepting spousal abuse as a normal part of life.

Substance use has also been linked to intimate partner violence, with studies suggesting that alcohol and other drugs can impair cognitive functioning, distort judgment, and heighten perceptions of risk or threat, thereby increasing the likelihood of violent behaviour (Cafferky, Mendez, Anderson, & Stith, 2018; Mason, Wolf, O'Rinn, & Ene, 2017; Low, Tiberio, Shortt, Capaldi, & Eddy, 2017). Shorey et al. (2018) further demonstrate that marijuana use is positively associated with psychological, physical, and sexual forms of IPV perpetration.

In addition, childhood exposure to physical violence has been shown to predict both victimisation and perpetration of intimate partner violence later in adult relationships (Spencer & Stith, 2018; Steel et al., 2017). These findings collectively suggest that IPV is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by cultural, behavioural, and developmental factors, underlining the importance of examining it through robust theoretical framework and within specific socio-cultural contexts such as Lagos State, Nigeria.

The introduction of the Family Support Unit.

The Family Support Unit (FSU) of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) is a vital institutional reaction to the issues of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), family violence, and child safety that exist in a widespread manner in Nigeria. The FSU was created to offer services based on victim-centred approaches so as to act as a go-in-between the law enforcers and the vulnerable groups of people, especially women and children (Aiyenigba, 2025). But, the efficiency of the FSU in serving its mandate is more closely related to the amount of publicity about the existence, functions, and access of the FSU. It is a specialised unit in the Nigerian Police Force and it is created to deal with cases of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual offences and other family related cases. It is the main mandate of the FSU to investigate cases of SGBV, provide them with counselling and psychosocial assistance, legal intervention, and referral to medical and social welfare services (Akangbe, Fawole &

Balogun 2022). FSUs are generally manned by officers whose training focuses on the sensitive cases and give them the confidentiality and empathetic approach and they usually work with the social welfare agencies, non-governmental organisations as well as legal professionals to give a comprehensive protection of the family.

The creation of the FSU is a larger push towards the decentralisation and localization of police services and making them more accessible to vulnerable groups. The units are victim-centred units whereby emphasis is made on assisting survivors in the criminal justice process and eliminating the stigma of reporting the incidences of SGBV and domestic violence. The FSU has a mandate that has been sanctioned by the national legal frameworks, including the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP Act) of 2015 which criminalises different forms of violence and requires police to provide support to the victims. They are found in police stations in different states in Nigeria with the high population in the urban centres and state capitals. An example is the Lagos State which has several FSUs such as Adeniji Adele, Ajah, Badagry, Festac and Ikeja, Ikorodu/ Igbogbo. The development of an FSU building in Sango Ota Area Police Command has been realised in Ogun State, with the help of the stakeholders in communities and the local government. On the North-East, FSUs and other child protection agencies have been set up in Borno, Adamawa, Sokoto and Zamfara States usually supported by the international agencies and non-governmental organisations. Irrespective of these efforts, FSUs cover the geographic area unequally. The city and southern states are more likely to have well established and better-resourced FSU compared to rural and northern regions, which frequently lack or have little effective FSU presence. Factors which are responsible to this disparity include allocation of resources, security and political/community support differences.

Actual information about the operations of the FSU such as the number of cases, prosecutions and referrals do not exist and usually lack any regional and unit disaggregates. Nigeria Police Force also releases yearly crime reports and data bank on activities of the police, yet the reports seldom present the statistics of the FSUs. Available statistics on the NPF Annual Crime Report (2019) reflected more than 2,900 reported cases of violence, which is inconclusive because it is probable that this number represents only an understatement of the actual prevalence because of underreporting and difficulties in collecting data.

The reports of the NGOs or civil societies are useful because they complement the official information by reporting the number of cases that were managed in certain states or areas by the FSUs. As an example, in 2019, the National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) received over 1,000 cases related to violence against women and children, with the National Population Commission estimating that approximately 50 percent of children in Nigeria become victims of some kind of violence, including domestic violence.

Community Awareness of the Police Support Services.

The most useful surveys that have been conducted nationally, like Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), and Afrobarometer do not ask many questions that are specific to the FSU but are generally related to the perceptions of people towards the police. The NDHS 2018, in its turn, had a domestic violence module and concluded that thirty percent of women between 15 and 49 years old have been victimised by their spouses or partners. The survey however did not measure the awareness or use of the FSU in isolation.

Recent report by Afrobarometer (2023) pointed out that merely 8 percent of the population of Nigeria sought the services of the police last year, and 62 percent of the population faced the police under other circumstances. Out of the police aids that sought the help of the police, 51% had no difficulty getting the police aid and 75% had to pay bribes. It is interesting to note that seventy nine percent of those questioned felt that the police were responsible enough to report an incident of gender based violence, implying that there was a certain level of trust exhibited by the respondents with regards to the police being responsive to the cases of SGBV although this does not automatically imply that the respondents were aware of the FSU or utilised it. Surveys and academic publications have investigated what people think about the Nigeria Police Force and by default, other specialised departments such as FSU. In one recent study, Ignatius Hua Nyam (2020) discovered a widespread lack of trust and confidence in the police, and the mean scores of trustworthiness (2.11 out of five), procedural justice (2.22) and effectiveness at 2.47 were low. The researchers also discovered that there were strong differences in the perception according to ethnic groups where, Tiv and Hausa, respondents had more positive perceptions compared to Yoruba and Igbo respondents. There was no significant influence of gender and literacy levels on perception.

Although these authors do not explicitly measure the level of awareness of the FSU, they bring out the wider picture of the relations between the people and the police which determine the likelihood of people utilising the services of specially-organised units.

Police Support Services are utilised.

The desire of civilians to report to the police intimate partner violence (IPV) in Nigeria is usually low and is influenced by the culture of the country, the feeling of stigma, distrust of the police forces. It has been observed that most of the survivors seek to settle through informal or family based solution as opposed to formal reporting (Research). There are various issues that contribute to the motivation of both victims or the general populace to report cases of IPV. These are: Cultural and social norms, most communities consider IPV a family business, which does not encourage them to call the police. Stigma and retaliation Fear Survivors have the concern of social backlash, financial reliance, or additional violence in the event that they report. Minor confidence to police response Low confidence to police response to IPV cases— Studies indicate a lack of trust in the effectiveness and sensitiveness of law enforcement to IPV cases. The patterns of reporting different regions of Nigeria are affected by variations in education, awareness, and gender patterns according to the regional disparity.

Although more and more attempts are being made at raising awareness, quite a number of Nigerians are still not ready to report IPV in the police, instead, they would take the issue to the family elders, religious leadership or even through mediation. Enforcement of the legal framework, responsiveness of the police and enhancement of general populace education are vital in boosting reporting levels.

Moreover, the studies show that involvement in police negative interaction, perceived dishonesty, unprofessionalism, and the absence of procedural justice may lead to low levels of trust and discourage people to use police services including the FSU. Crime victims like rape have not been eager to call on the grounds of unfriendly and shameful consequences as well as stigma. Moreover, gender and literacy levels do not seem to be important contributors to the general perception of the police, but women, particularly those residing in rural environments, can encounter even greater barriers to accessing FSUs because of the cultural practises and the absence of information.

Theoretical Framework

Given the complex nature of intimate partner violence, shaped by cultural, behavioural, and structural factors, it is essential to adopt a theoretical lens that captures how individuals interact with institutions and perceive justice. In this study, Procedural Justice Theory provides that lens, offering a framework to examine how awareness, utilisation, and satisfaction with law enforcement strategies are influenced by perceptions of fairness, legitimacy, and trust in the justice system.

First developed by Tyler (1990) and later refined by scholars such as Tomkins and Applequist (2008), procedural justice theory posits that public willingness to comply with the law, cooperate with authorities, and express satisfaction with legal interventions depends less on the favourability of the outcome (distributive justice) and more on the perceived fairness of the process itself. Within the context of intimate partner violence (IPV), the fairness of investigative and judicial procedures is therefore a critical component of victims' experiences and warrants careful examination. Procedural justice is defined as the perceived fairness of the procedures used to make decisions or allocations, often evaluated independently of the eventual legal outcome (Tomkins & Applequist, 2008; Calton & Cattaneo, 2014). Building on this definition, Tomkins and Applequist (2008) identified four essential components of procedural justice: respect, fairness, trustworthiness, and voice. These elements serve as the primary evaluative criteria for public interactions with law enforcement and the judiciary. In the IPV context, a victim would perceive law enforcement strategies as procedurally just if she felt treated with dignity by officers, regarded investigative processes as unbiased, trusted the sincerity of personnel, and was afforded a meaningful opportunity to narrate her experiences.

The application of this theory is particularly significant in Lagos, where IPV is frequently dismissed as a private family matter. Awareness of institutional strategies, such as those spearheaded by the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA), does not automatically translate into utilisation. According to Tyler (1990), awareness must be accompanied by perceptions of institutional legitimacy. If the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) and specialised Family Support Units (FSUs) demonstrate procedural fairness, survivors are more likely to overcome cultural stigma surrounding "interference" and utilise these services. Furthermore, satisfaction with enforcement

strategies is not determined solely by convictions; rather, survivors who feel respected, heard, and fairly treated during their most vulnerable moments are statistically more likely to report higher levels of satisfaction. Consequently, Procedural Justice Theory provides a robust analytical lens for examining the nexus between how strategies are communicated (awareness), how they are accessed (utilisation), and the qualitative experiences of end-users (satisfaction) within the socio-cultural landscape of Lagos State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design, using a structured questionnaire to collect quantitative data from 400 purposively selected respondents across four local government areas in Lagos State. Purposive sampling was considered appropriate as it ensured that participants were drawn from communities where law enforcement strategies addressing intimate partner violence were operational. Of the 400 questionnaires administered, 383 were successfully retrieved and analysed, representing a 96 percent response rate. The instrument was designed to capture information on public awareness of law enforcement strategies, utilisation of available services, and satisfaction with the outcomes of such interventions. Data were presented in frequency tables to provide descriptive statistics, while bivariate analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between identified strategies and the satisfaction reported by respondents who accessed such services. This approach allowed the study to assess not only the extent of awareness and utilisation but also the perceived effectiveness of law enforcement interventions in curbing intimate partner violence.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents based on Socio-demographic Characteristics

Socio-demographic variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
16-25	86	23
26-35	147	38
36-45	103	27
46-55	38	10
56 and above	9	2
Total	383	100
Sex		
Female	189	49

Male	194	51
Total	383	100
Marital Status		
Married	210	55
In a relationship	16	4
Divorced	6	2
Separated	5	1
Single	141	37
Widowed	5	1
Total	383	100
Occupation		
Employed	80	21
Self Employed	231	60
Unemployed	72	19
Total	383	100
Education		
No Formal Education	14	4
Primary Education	11	3
Secondary Education	158	41
Tertiary Education	200	52
Total	383	100
Religion		
Christianity	301	79
Islam	81	21
Others	1	
Geopolitical Zone		
North Central	27	7
North East	4	1
North West	12	3
South East	67	18
South-South	41	11
South West	232	61
Total	383	100

Researcher's Field Survey

The socio-demographic data revealed that the largest proportion of respondents, 147 individuals (38 percent), were within the age group of 26-35 years. A cumulative 88 percent of participants fell between the ages of 16 and 45, indicating that the majority of those who completed the survey were within the age range most commonly reported as being affected by the perpetration and experience of intimate partner violence.

This aligns with national data, as the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) reports that women between the ages of 15 and 49 are the most frequent victims of physical and sexual abuse by intimate partners (NDHS, 2013; 2018).

Furthermore, the demographic profile of respondents revealed that 194 participants were male (51 percent), while 189 were female (49 percent). Although women are disproportionately affected by intimate partner violence, the majority of respondents in this survey were men. Marital status statistics showed that 210 respondents (55 percent) were married, indicating that most participants were either married or in an intimate relationship, which made them well suited for the study. In terms of economic status, 81 percent of respondents reported being economically empowered through personal businesses, private employment, or public sector work. Educational attainment was also relatively high, with 200 respondents (53 percent) having completed tertiary education. This suggests that most participants were well educated and therefore capable of providing informed responses to the survey questions.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on contact with Police and Court

	Frequency	Percentage
Had contact with the Police		
Yes	251	66
No	132	34
Total	383	100.0
Had contact with the court		
Yes	161	42
No	222	58
Total	383	100.0

Researcher’s Field Survey

The distribution of respondents who had contact with law enforcement agencies is presented in Table 2. A total of 251 respondents, representing 66 percent, reported having had contact with the Police, while 132 respondents (34 percent) indicated no such contact. Similarly, 222 respondents (58 percent) had interacted with the courts, whereas 160 respondents (42 percent) had not. Overall, the findings show that

the majority of respondents had engaged with both the Police and the courts in relation to intimate partner violence cases.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents based on Family Support Unit Awareness

Awareness of the existence of Family Support Units	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	31	8
No	352	92
Total	383	100.0

Researcher’s Field Survey

Results from the survey, as presented in Table 3, revealed that only 31 respondents (8 percent) were aware of the existence of Family Support Units (FSUs) within police stations in their local government areas, while the vast majority, 352 respondents (92 percent), had no knowledge of such units. Above all, the findings highlight a significant gap in public awareness of specialised police units designed to address intimate partner violence.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents based on the willingness to report IPV

The willingness of respondents to report experience or witness of IPV	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	262	68
No	121	32
Total	383	100.0

Researcher’s Field Survey

Table 4 presents respondents’ views on whether they would report experiences of intimate partner violence or act as witnesses. A total of 262 respondents (68 percent) indicated that they would be willing to report such experiences to the appropriate authorities, while 121 respondents (32 percent) stated that they would not. This duality reflects the broader tension documented in IPV research between increasing recognition of IPV as a public issue and persistent barriers to formal reporting. The reluctance to report is consistent with findings from the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS, 2013; 2018), which highlight

that IPV remains underreported due to cultural norms framing violence as a private family matter.

From the perspective of Procedural Justice Theory, these findings highlight the importance of institutional legitimacy and perceptions of fairness in shaping reporting behaviour. Tyler (1990) argues that individuals are more likely to cooperate with authorities when they perceive procedures as fair, respectful, and trustworthy. In this study, respondents’ reluctance to report IPV reflects not only cultural barriers but also doubts about the fairness and effectiveness of police and judicial processes. Conversely, the majority willingness to report suggests that when individuals believe their voices will be heard and respected, they are more inclined to engage with formal systems.

This result stresses that awareness of IPV services must be accompanied by efforts to build trust and demonstrate procedural fairness. Without addressing stigma and institutional credibility, reporting rates will remain constrained, limiting the effectiveness of IPV interventions in Lagos State.

Table 5. Distribution of respondents based on satisfaction with the Criminal Justice System

	Frequency	%		Frequency	%
Easy access to the Police for reporting			Enjoyment of Government financial empowerment		
Not at all satisfied	189	49	Not at all satisfied	236	62
Slightly satisfied	64	17	Lightly satisfied	60	16
Moderately satisfied	57	15	Moderately satisfied	44	12
Very satisfied	44	12	Very satisfied	26	7
Completely satisfied	29	8	Completely satisfied	17	4
Total	383	100.0	Total	383	100.0
Prompt referral to healthcare facilities			Mediation between parties involved in a		

			dispute or violence		
Not at all satisfied	186	49	Not at all satisfied	192	50
Slightly satisfied	69	18	Lightly satisfied	64	17
Moderately satisfied	60	16	Moderately satisfied	75	20
Very satisfied	35	9	Very satisfied	30	8
Completely satisfied	33	9	Completely satisfied	22	6
Total	383	100.0	Total	383	100.0
Referral to welfare shelters where victims stay temporarily			Easy collection of police report for protective order in court		
Not at all satisfied	215	56	Not at all satisfied	189	49
Slightly satisfied	51	13	Lightly satisfied	68	18
Moderately satisfied	62	16	Moderately satisfied	62	16
Very satisfied	36	9	Very satisfied	28	7
Completely satisfied	19	5	Completely satisfied	36	9
Total	383	100.0	Total	383	100.0
Enlightenment workshops by the Police, courts or NGOs			Referral to professional counsellors		
Not at all satisfied	218	57	Not at all satisfied	143	37
Slightly satisfied	60	16	Lightly satisfied	91	24
Moderately satisfied	62	16	Moderately satisfied	61	16
Very satisfied	23	6	Very satisfied	42	11

Completely satisfied	20	5	Completely satisfied	46	12
Total	383	100.0	Total	383	100.0
Encouraged third party reporting of violence			Ensured justice was gotten		
Not at all satisfied	171	45	Not at all satisfied	143	37
Slightly satisfied	64	17	Lightly satisfied	83	22
Moderately satisfied	61	16	Moderately satisfied	61	16
Very satisfied	59	15	Very satisfied	38	10
Completely satisfied	28	7	Completely satisfied	58	15
Total	383	100.0	Total	383	100.0

Researcher's Field Survey

The results show that respondents' satisfaction with their interactions across agencies of the

criminal justice system was generally low. Nearly half (49 percent) reported dissatisfaction with their interactions with the Police, and only 8 percent were completely satisfied. Similarly, 49 percent were dissatisfied with referrals to healthcare facilities, while 43 percent expressed slight to moderate satisfaction and just 9 percent were completely satisfied. Dissatisfaction was even higher with referrals to welfare shelters (56 percent) and with enlightenment workshops (57 percent). Financial empowerment initiatives by the Lagos State government also received poor ratings, with 62 percent of respondents dissatisfied and only 4 percent completely satisfied. Mediation strategies were met with mixed responses: half of the respondents (50 percent) were dissatisfied, while 44 percent reported slight to moderate satisfaction and 6 percent complete satisfaction. Referral to professional counsellors stood out as comparatively more effective, with 67 percent of respondents satisfied, while dissatisfaction was lower at 37 percent. Finally, regarding court verdicts, 37 percent of respondents expressed dissatisfaction, suggesting

that outcomes in the judicial process were perceived more positively compared to other strategies.

These findings resonate with existing literature that highlights the challenges of institutional responses to intimate partner violence in Nigeria. Studies such as Dada, Dosunmu, and Oyediji (2015) and Messing et al. (2015) emphasise that survivors' satisfaction is often undermined by inadequate institutional support, poor coordination among agencies, and limited resources. The high levels of dissatisfaction with police interactions and referrals to healthcare and welfare services reflect broader concerns about the accessibility, responsiveness, and credibility of these institutions. Respondents' relatively higher satisfaction with professional counselling suggests that services perceived as supportive, respectful, and directly addressing survivors' needs are more likely to be valued.

From the perspective of Procedural Justice Theory, these results highlight the importance of fairness, respect, and trustworthiness in shaping satisfaction with institutional responses. Tyler (1990) argues that individuals' willingness to cooperate with authorities depends less on outcomes and more on whether they feel heard, respected, and treated fairly. In this study, dissatisfaction with police, shelters, and financial empowerment programmes reflects perceptions of procedural unfairness and lack of legitimacy. On the other hand, higher satisfaction with counselling and court verdicts suggests that when processes are perceived as more transparent and supportive, respondents are more likely to view them positively.

Generally, the findings highlight that while some strategies, such as counselling and judicial verdicts, show promise, most institutional responses are failing to meet survivors' expectations. This reinforces the need for reforms that embed procedural justice principles into IPV interventions, ensuring that survivors experience fairness, respect, and trust in their interactions with the criminal justice system.

Table 6: Bivariate analysis between identified strategies and satisfaction of the Public with the Police in dealing with IPV

Easy Reporting	Not at all satisfied	slightly satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Very satisfied	completely satisfied	Total	
Yes	113 (46.3%)	40 (16.4%)	39 (16.0%)	33 (13.5%)	19 (7.8%)	244 (100.0%)	$\chi^2 = 4.311$, $p = 0.365$
No	76 (54.7%)	24 (17.3%)	18 (12.9%)	11 (7.9%)	10 (7.2%)	139 (100.0%)	
Total	189 (49.3%)	64 (16.7%)	57 (14.9%)	44 (11.5%)	29 (7.6%)	383 (100.0%)	
Referral to healthcare facilities							
Yes	113 (46.3%)	41 (16.8%)	41 (16.8%)	23 (9.4%)	26 (10.7%)	244 (100.0%)	$\chi^2 = 5.113$, $p = 0.276$
No	73 (52.5%)	28 (20.1%)	19 (13.7%)	12 (8.6%)	7(5.0%)	139 (100.0%)	
Total	186 (48.6%)	69 (18.0%)	60 (15.7%)	35(9.1%)	33 (8.6%)	383 (100.0%)	
Referral to welfare shelters							
Yes	133 (54.5%)	27 (11.1%)	41(16.8%)	31 (12.7%)	12 (4.0 %)	244 (100.0%)	$\chi^2 = 10.849$, $p=0.028$
No	82 (59.0%)	24 (17.3%)	21(15.1%)	5 (3.6%)	7(5.0%)	139 (100.0%)	
Total	215 (56.1%)	51 (13.3%)	62(16.2%)	36(9.4%)	19(5.0%)	383 (100.0%)	
Enlightenment workshops							
Yes	142 (58.2%)	31 (12.7%)	37(15.2%)	20(8.2%)	14(5.7%)	244 (100.0%)	$\chi^2 = 10.110$, $p=0.039$

No	76 (54.7%)	29 (20.9%)	25 (18.0%)	3 (2.2%)	6 (4.3%)	139 (100.0%)	
Total	218 (56.9%)	60 (15.7%)	62 (16.2%)	23 (6.0%)	20 (5.2%)	383 (100.0%)	
Encouraged third party reporting							
Yes	104 (42.6%)	37 (15.2%)	38 (15.6%)	43 (17.6%)	22 (9.0%)	244 (100.0%)	$\chi^2 = 6.455$, p=0.168
No	67 (48.2%)	27 (19.4%)	23 (16.5%)	16 (11.5%)	6 (4.3%)	139 (100.0%)	
Total	171 (44.6%)	64 (16.7%)	61 (15.9%)	59 (15.4%)	28 (7.3%)	383 (100.0%)	
Access to state funding							
Yes	149 (61.1%)	39 (16.0%)	27 (11.1%)	18 (7.4%)	11 (4.5%)	244 (100.0%)	$\chi^2 = .532$, p=0.970
No	87 (62.6%)	21 (15.1%)	17 (12.2%)	8 (5.8%)	6 (4.3%)	139 (100.0%)	
Total	236 (61.6%)	60 (15.7%)	44 (11.5%)	26 (6.8%)	17 (4.4%)	383 (100.0%)	
Mediation between parties							
Yes	118 (48.4%)	46 (18.9%)	46 (18.9%)	20 (8.2%)	14 (5.7%)	244 (100.0%)	$\chi^2 = 2.563$, p=0.633
No	74 (53.2%)	18 (12.9%)	29 (20.9%)	10 (7.2%)	8 (5.8%)	139 (100.0%)	
Total	192 (50.1%)	64 (16.7%)	75 (19.6%)	30 (7.8%)	22 (5.7%)	383 (100.0%)	
Ease of collecting police report							
Yes	121 (49.6%)	42 (17.2%)	38 (15.6%)	18 (7.4%)	25 (10.2%)	244 (100.0%)	$\chi^2 = .792$, p=0.939
No	68 (48.9%)	26 (18.7%)	24 (17.3%)	10 (7.2%)	11 (7.9%)	139 (100.0%)	
Total	189 (49.3%)	68 (17.8%)	62 (16.2%)	28 (7.3%)	36 (9.4%)	383 (100.0%)	
Referral to Professional counsellor							
Yes	89 (36.5%)	61	39 (16.0%)	27 (11.1%)	28 (11.5%)	244 (100.0%)	$\chi^2 = 0.737$,

		(25.0%)							p=0.947
No	54 (38.8%)	30 (21.6%)	22(15.8%)	15 (10.8%)	18(12.9%)	139 (100.0%)			
Total	143 (37.3%)	91 (23.8%)	61(15.9%)	42 (11.0%)	46(12.0%)	383 (100.0%)			
Ensure justice									
Yes	92 (37.7%)	53 (21.7%)	39(16.0%)	24(9.8%)	36(14.8%)	244 (100.0%)	$\chi^2 = .099$,		
No	51 (36.7%)	30 (21.6%)	22(15.8%)	14 (10.1%)	22(15.8%)	139 (100.0%)	p=0.999		
Total	143 (37.3%)	83 (21.7%)	61(15.9%)	38(9.9%)	58(15.1%)	383 (100.0%)			

Researcher’s compilation

The evaluation of associations between public awareness, interaction with the police, and satisfaction with criminal justice system (CJS) strategies for addressing intimate partner violence (IPV) revealed mixed outcomes. Nearly half of respondents (46 percent) were dissatisfied with the ease of access to the Police for filing reports, while 54 percent expressed varying degrees of satisfaction. This reflects broader concerns in Nigerian IPV research, where survivors often cite police inefficiency, lack of sensitivity, and procedural delays as barriers to justice. Similar patterns were observed with referrals to healthcare facilities, where satisfaction levels were modest, and with welfare shelters, where responses were evenly split between satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Importantly, the association between satisfaction and welfare shelter referrals was statistically significant (Chi-square = 10.849, $p = 0.028$), suggesting that perceptions of shelter accessibility and effectiveness play a meaningful role in shaping overall satisfaction.

Enlightenment workshops also showed statistical significance (Chi-square = 10.110, $p = 0.039$), though more than half of respondents (57 percent) were dissatisfied. This indicates that while awareness campaigns are recognised as important, their current design and delivery may not adequately meet community needs. Other strategies, such as third-party reporting and government financial empowerment, did not show statistically significant associations, reflecting respondents' scepticism about their effectiveness. Mediation between parties was viewed negatively by a majority (53 percent), echoing concerns in the literature that mediation often trivialises IPV and prioritises reconciliation over survivor safety. Access to police reports for protective orders was evenly divided, with satisfaction levels spread across slight to complete satisfaction, suggesting procedural inconsistencies. Referral to professional counsellors stood out as comparatively more effective, with 67 percent of respondents satisfied, though statistical significance was not established.

These findings resonate with existing literature that highlights the challenges of institutional responses to IPV in Nigeria. Scholars such as Dada, Dosunmu, and Oyediji (2015) argue that while the criminal justice system is critical in curbing crime, including IPV, its effectiveness is undermined by weak enforcement, poor coordination, and low public confidence. From the perspective of Procedural Justice Theory, the results underline that satisfaction is closely tied to perceptions of fairness, respect, and legitimacy in institutional processes. Tyler (1990)

emphasises that individuals' cooperation with authorities depends less on outcomes and more on whether they feel heard and treated fairly. In this study, dissatisfaction with police, shelters, and financial empowerment reflects perceptions of procedural unfairness and lack of institutional credibility. Conversely, higher satisfaction with counselling and court verdicts suggests that when processes are perceived as supportive and transparent, respondents are more likely to view them positively.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that while intimate partner violence (IPV) remains prevalent in Lagos State, agencies within the criminal justice system (CJS) are not adequately confronting the problem. Although many victims and members of the public are aware of strategies adopted to curb IPV, dissatisfaction was particularly high with police interactions, referrals to healthcare and welfare services, financial empowerment initiatives, and enlightenment workshops. While professional counselling and court verdicts showed relatively higher satisfaction, they were not statistically significant predictors of effectiveness. Statistically significant associations were observed with referrals to welfare shelters and enlightenment workshops, suggesting that these strategies, though poorly rated, remain important areas for reform. The perception of procedural unfairness, inefficiency, and a lack of empathy among the victims and the general population lead to a loss of trust in the law enforcement, and thus, it constitutes an urgent need that the Police training should take a trauma-focused approach, be accountable, and have an open-handed approach to the IPV cases. Moreover, referrals to healthcare, welfare services, and financial empowerment have weaknesses indicating low coordination among agencies, so victims expect a comprehensive response, yet the services are divided, leaving no confidence in the system. Moreover, although the level of counselling and court decisions were relatively more satisfied and significant predictors of efficiency, it leads to the conclusion that although the interventions are anticipated to be treasured, they do not transform the experiences of justice of victims and the people. Largely, the findings highlight that institutional responses are failing to meet survivors' expectations, mostly due to perceptions of procedural unfairness, inefficiency, and lack of legitimacy.

Based on the findings, the study proposes the following:

1. Strengthen institutional capacity: Improve police responsiveness by providing adequate tools, training, and office space, and sustainable funding, particularly for Family Support Units. And also strengthen multi-sector collaboration (police,

- courts, welfare, healthcare) to ensure seamless support.
2. Enhance awareness programmes: Redesign enlightenment workshops to be more community-specific and impactful, ensuring they resonate with diverse audiences. There is a need to move beyond symbolic justice (verdicts, workshops) and towards practical empowerment.
 3. Expand supportive services: Increase investment in welfare shelters and healthcare referrals to improve accessibility and credibility. Quality improvement of shelters, will ensure a more impactful survivor-centered delivery.
 4. Promote counselling services: Build on the relatively higher satisfaction with counselling by expanding access and integrating it into formal CJS responses.
 5. Embed procedural justice principles: Ensure survivors and the public perceive agencies as fair, respectful, and trustworthy, recognising that satisfaction depends less on outcomes than on perceptions of fairness and dignity.

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