The Socio-Economic Determinants of Domestic Violence among Married Couples in Egor Local Government Area. Edo State Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper examined the Socio-Economic Determinants of Domestic Violence among Married Couples in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State Nigeria. The study explored two specific objective which were to: investigate whether economic factors contribute to domestic violence against women in Egor Local Government Area and examine the influence of income on domestic violence among couples in Egor Local Government Area. The study adopted Gendered Resource theory. The sample size of the study and questionnaire for the study was 384 but 374 questionnaires were retrieved. The study established that socio-economic factor is one of the major determinates of domestic violence among married couples such as unemployment and underemployment, where there is inadequate financial support for meeting the family basic needs. The paper recommended that there should be creation of society free from domestic violence, the government should punish the offending spouse in order to dissuade others. The Government should also set up intervention facilities where couples may resolve their differences and premarital education and counselling should be part of the secondary curriculum

Keywords: Domestic, couple, Economic, marriage, violence

Background to the Study

Domestic violence has become a major global concern, impacting public health worldwide. Often used interchangeably with intimate partner violence, it refers to violence perpetrated by one partner against another in an intimate relationship. Predominantly directed at women, it's a violation of their fundamental rights and a documented global phenomenon. The World Health Organization (WHO)

estimates that roughly 1 in 3 women globally have experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner or non-partner in their lifetime (2021). This violence transcends social status and background, yet disproportionately affects women in rural areas with lower education and income (Igbokwe et al., 2012). Often disguised as control measures, husbands may resort to hitting, slapping, pushing, or even using objects as weapons (Oladepo et al., 2011). Uwameiye & Iserameiye (2013) link it to the patriarchal system that fosters unequal power dynamics in marriages, reinforced by social norms and learning.

Despite its prevalence, public responses to domestic violence range from acceptance to denial. Alokan (2013) suggests that while violence might occur in 30% of families, it often goes unrecognized. In certain developing regions like South Asia and Africa, wife-beating is normalized and even justified (Adebayo, 2013). Studies reveal a concerning prevalence across various countries: 30.5% in Nigeria, 43.4% in Zimbabwe, 45.3% in Kenya, and upwards to 57.6% in Cameroon (Kebede et al., 2022). Similarly, South Asia reports staggering numbers, with up to 60% of women in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and 50% in Afghanistan, experiencing daily abuse at home, often excused for reasons like bearing girls, arguing with husbands, or neglecting childcare (Oyeoku et al., 2015).

Domestic violence cuts across social classes (Nikolova et al., 2020). Its occurrence hinges not only on the act itself but also on societal recognition and perceptions (Yalley & Olutayo, 2020). Cultural and religious practices can obscure its true nature, hindering identification and intervention (Mshweshwe, 2020). Aris (2011) identifies additional contributing factors such as lower socioeconomic status, substance abuse, unequal partner ages, and unemployment.

Statement of the Problem

The past decade has seen a significant rise in national surveys collecting data on intimate partner violence (Sardinha et al., 2022). Often unaware of the root cause, women may endure persistent abuse, leading to illness or even death. Domestic violence against women and girls has reached alarming levels in both homes and workplaces. It has become a tool for suppressing women's rights in Africa (Department for International Development, 2007). This violence dehumanizes women, subjecting them to exploitation. Beyond violating their fundamental

rights, it leaves them feeling helpless and frustrated, silenced by fear, shame, and ignorance. Law enforcement may even ridicule victims, dismissing their reports. In Nigeria, domestic violence manifests in various forms, including rape, mistreatment, deprivation, and physical and emotional punishment. Often supported by cultural and religious beliefs, it forces women to suffer in silence. The consequences are dire, leading to miscarriages, maternal deaths, psychological trauma, and broken marriages with negative impacts on children. A Nigerian study by Adam et al. (2022) found that domestic violence can be psychological (54.3%), physical (30.8%), sexual (17.2%), and economic (16.3%).

While domestic violence affects all societies and socioeconomic groups, it appears to be more prevalent among women with lower economic and social standing. Factors like low literacy, poverty, lack of resources, and child-related challenges significantly contribute to both the perpetration and experience of violence. Despite numerous existing studies on domestic violence in Nigeria, the true extent of the underlying socioeconomic factors remains unclear. This study aims to bridge this gap by examining the socio-economic determinants of domestic violence among married couples in Egor Local Government Area, Benin City, Edo State.

Objective of the Study

The primary objective of this research is to examine the socio-economic determinants of domestic violence among married couples in Egor Local Government Area. The specific objectivesweare to:

i. investigate whether economic factors contribute to domestic violence against women in Egor Local Government Area.

ii. examine the influence of income on domestic violence among couples in Egor Local Government Area.

Literature Review

Domestic violence is a multifaceted concept with numerous definitions offered by scholars. Ishola (2016) defines it as the deliberate and repeated abuse of a household member, causing pain, distress, or injury. It violates fundamental human rights and encompasses a range of behaviors, including battering of partners and children, sexual abuse, marital rape, and harmful traditional

practices directed at women (Ahiie, 2009). Expanding on this definition, Harrison (2014) and Oyelade (2012) describe domestic violence as encompassing physical, sexual, emotional, economic, and psychological actions or threats used to control another person. This includes acts that isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, or harm another individual. The key takeaway is that domestic violence is a deliberate act, not accidental. Scott and Marshall (2009) offer a more specific perspective, defining domestic violence as primarily male-perpetrated physical or psychological violence against women. They argue that the term emerged in the 1970s alongside feminist movements that established shelters for battered women. This viewpoint emphasizes domestic violence as a reflection of gender inequality and women's oppression. Broader definitions encompass any violence within a family unit, with child abuse being a distinct category.

Despite the various angles different authors take, a common thread emerges: domestic violence has detrimental consequences for all parties involved. Ugochukwu & Okorie, (2014) domestic Violence against woman can be in diverse forms including wife beating. The term connotes the use of excessive physical force that ultimately results to injury to that person which the great force is being applied upon. When it is directed at the female in a marital relationship it is called wife beating (Muomah, 2010). Suaad (2015) highlights the varied terminology used to describe wife beating, including wife abuse, battery, partner abuse, and physical abuse. It essentially involves overt physical violence perpetrated by a husband against his wife. Wife beating is a manifestation of gender issues, often taking the form of hitting, slapping, kicking, pushing, and even using objects as weapons (Alokan, 2013).

Domestic violence has wide-ranging and sometimes lasting impacts on victims. The effects can be both physical and psychological, harming not just the direct victim but also any children exposed to parental violence.

Physical Effect: While the physical consequences vary, victims commonly suffer bodily injuries like lacerations, bruises, broken bones, and head trauma. They can also experience internal bleeding, chronic pelvic pain, gastrointestinal issues, frequent urinary tract and vaginal infections, sexually transmitted diseases, and even HIV transmission. Domestic abuse during pregnancy is especially

concerning, carrying risks of complications. A 2005 study in Abuja found physical, sexual and psychological abuse was prevalent among pregnant women, with one-third reporting domestic violence. Psychological abuse was most common, followed by physical then sexual abuse. Around 20% required medical care due to their injuries, with premature labor being the top medical complication (Efetie & Salami, 2007). Pregnant victims of battery face elevated risks of preterm or complicated deliveries.

Economic Effect: Many victims sacrifice financial stability when leaving abusive relationships during divorce proceedings to avoid further abuse. This often leaves them impoverished later in life. In extreme cases where the abuser murders their spouse, it endangers the children who become orphans unable to be provided for. With no parents, they must rely on peers, increasing chances of following negative paths - dropping out of school, joining gangs, and contributing to societal poverty and unrest. The disruption to their education and inability to learn vocational skills perpetuates a cycle of poverty in communities.

Social I Effects: It is believed that children from families impacted by domestic violence and spousal killing miss out on the affection and dual nurturing of both parents, which is crucial for healthy development. Raising children in a single-parent household after one parent is killed creates serious challenges. These children carry a stigma that makes it difficult for them to relate well in society, as they may be viewed as potential replicators of their parent's wickedness. In cases where a father is killed by his own son, it places an immense burden on the mother who may be driven to desperate measures just to provide for the children her husband left behind.

Psychological Effects: Child victims of sexual abuse within domestic violence situations can suffer long-term psychological impacts like depression, self-destructive behaviors, anger issues, poor self-esteem, feelings of isolation and stigma, difficulty trusting others (especially men), dysfunctional martial/relationships, and a tendency toward being re-victimized later in life.

Stigmatization: The stigma surrounding domestic violence is a major factor that prevents many victims from speaking out and seeking help. They remain silent

about their abuse due to fears of being stigmatized. However, an even greater challenge is the poor response and lack of adequate support services from the criminal justice system (police, courts) and social service providers (hospitals, social welfare) for victims and their families/friends who do attempt to get help.

The health implications of domestic violence can range from minor to severe. Physical effects may include death, injuries, gynecological issues, and harmful impacts during pregnancy. Mental health consequences can involve depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicidal tendencies, substance abuse or dependence. Psychological effects like anxiety disorders, eating disorders, intense fear, somatization (physical symptoms without medical cause), phobias, panic attacks, sleep disorders, and obsessive-compulsive behaviors have also been linked to domestic violence. Symptoms can sometimes mirror those of PTSD (Barnish, 2004; WHO 2011).

Theoretical Framework: Gendered Resource Theory

One of the long-standing objectives of macro social research is to comprehend the determinants of domestic violence (DV). This line of inquiry comprises multiple essential elements. Based on the research of Atkinson, Greenstein, and Lang (2005), three broad theories about how resources impact the incidence of domestic violence against women can be identified. Resource theory and relative resource theory are two social structural stances that are frequently employed to explain domestic violence against women. The main indicator of domestic violence against women has been shown to be the availability of resources. These writers claim that whereas relative resource theory refers to married males who have less resources than their spouses, resource theory refers to married men who have limited resources to provide.

In particular, both theories highlight the importance of having resources—which are usually operationalized as income, work, or education—as the main predictor of domestic violence against women. The perpetrators use violence to gain obedience and compliance in the absence of resources (Atkinson, Greenstein, & Lang, 2005) as they view it as a power base, as an alternative to material resources. Relatively more women resources could increase violence due to the stress caused by status instability (Heise, 2011; Gracia & Merlo; 2016). On the other hand,

scholars have recently argued that relatively less women resources could lead to more violence due to marital dependency (Davis & Greenstein, 2009). Utilising this reasoning, resource theory has been enhanced to optimise the forecast that spouses will‟ gender ideologies are critical, where the degree to which men hold breadwinner ideals is important. Gender ideologies are how one identifies oneself with regard to marital status which range from „traditional‟ (viewed by the belief that husbands should be primary breadwinners and wives should remain at home) to „egalitarian‟ (seen by the notion that the contribution of women to home income is essential). Gender ideology, then, serves as a lens through which people see their social environment and make judgements. In keeping with these views, Atkinson et al. (2005), who observed the husband's gender ideology and its relationship with women's share of household earnings, found that the women's share in total household earnings is positively related to risk of violence only when husband is traditional. According to gendered resource theory, women with traditional husbands and roles as the primary breadwinners are most vulnerable to abuse. These resource theories—resource, relative, and gendered resource theories— provide structural explanations for women's abuse that place an emphasis on violence as a kind of recompense for husbands‟ shortage of resources. These theories have received wide support (Gracia & Merlo, 2016). From a social point of view, these theories say that men are the head of the family and have the power to maintain dominance in the family (Davis & Greenstein, 2009). On top of that, gendered resource theory has been widely applied to study how economic related to gender roles increase women's risk for domestic violence

Research Methodology

The population is the entirety of the items or components under study, to which our findings and their generalisations have been applied. Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of the population to be representative of the entire population, allowing conclusions about the total to be drawn from the sample (Sellitz, 1997). Nigeria's Edo State includes the Local Government Area of Egor. Uselu, Egor, a local government area that is a component of the greater Benin City metropolitan area, is home to the organisation's headquarters. 339,899 people called Egor L.G.A., Edo State, Nigeria, home as of the 2006 census, which covered an area of 93 km2 and was performed across the state. The Egor L.G.A., Edo State, has a projection of 545,800 people (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

In this investigation, simple random sampling was employed. Every unit included in the sample has an equal chance of being included in the sample. A total number of three hundred and eighty-four (384) respondents were used for the study.
Sample size = (Z-score) 2 * p*(1-p) / (margin of error) 2
Z-score = 1.96 for confidence level 95%
P=545,800
Margin of error =0.5
Sample size= 384

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

Table: 1Demographic Information on Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	175	46.8
Female	199	53.2
Total	374	100.0
Age		
18-30 years	121	32.35
31-40years	160	42.78
41-50years	67	17.9
51 years and above	26	7.0
Total	374	100.0
Marital status		
Single	222	59.4
Married	145	38.8
Divorce	7	1.9
Total	374	100.0
Educational Qualification		
Primary	3	.8
Secondary	18	4.8
OND/NCE/Diploma	172	46.0
HND/B.Sc./B. A	166	44.4
Postgraduate	15	4.0
Total	374	100.0

Source: Researcher's fieldwork survey, 2024

Table 1 shows that out of a total of 374 respondents, 175 are male while 199 are female. In terms of age, out of a total of 374 respondents, 121 of the respondents are between 18-30 years, 160 of the total respondents are within the age bracket of 31-40years, 67 of the total respondents are within the age bracket of 41-50years, while 26 of the total respondents are above 50 years. In terms of marital status, out of a total of 374 respondents, 222 of the total respondents are single, 145 of the total respondents are married while 7 are divorced. In terms of educational qualification, out of a total of 374 respondents, 3 are primary school holders, 18 are SSCE holders, 172 are OND/NCE/Diploma holders, while 166 are HND/B.Sc./B.A holders while 15 of the respondents are postgraduates.

Table: 2 Investigate how Economic lead to domestic violence against women in Egor Local Government Area

S/N	Descriptive Statistics				
	Questions	**N**	**Total score**	**Mean**	**Decision**
1 .	Economic climate and employment conditions can often lead to domestic violence if not handled with care	374	1578.28	4.22	Positive
2.	Inabilities to afford medical care and housing often leads to domestic violence	374	1522.18	4.07	Positive
3.	Domestic violence is a common occurrence in many families, countries and it transcends social, economic, religious and cultural groups	374	1533.4	4.1	Positive
4.	economic dependence can contribute to women remaining in violent relationships	374	1582.02	4.23	Positive
	Grand Mean			4.155	**Positive**

Source: Researcher's fieldwork survey, (2024)

The result in table 2 above shows that most of the respondents gave positive response to the itemized items in table 2. Majority of the respondents agreed that economic climate and employment conditions can often lead to domestic violence if not handled with care; that Inabilities to afford medical care and housing often leads to domestic violence; that domestic violence is a common occurrence in many families, countries and it transcends social, economic, religious and cultural groups and that economic dependence can contribute to women remaining in violent relationships.

Table 3: access the influence of income on Domestic violence amongst couples in Egor Local Government Area

S/N	Descriptive Statistics				
	Questions	**N**	**Total score**	**Mean**	**Decision**
5.	Women in households with low incomes are more likely to experience domestic violence than women in slightly better-off households	374	1731.62	4.63	Positive
6.	poverty exacerbates the abuse among couples	374	1810.16	4.84	Positive
7.	The composition of family groups has most times led to domestic violence in the society	374	1507.22	4.03	Positive
8.	financial constraints limit the range of options for escaping victims to escape violence	374	1548.36	4.14	Positive
	Grand Mean			4.41	Positive

Source: Researcher's fieldwork survey, (2024)

The result in table 3 above shows that most of the respondents gave positive response to the itemized items in table 3. Majority of the respondents agreed that women in households with low incomes are more likely to experience domestic

violence than women in slightly better-off households; poverty exacerbates the abuse among couples; that the composition of family groups has most times led to domestic violence in the society and that financial constraints limit the range of options for escaping victims to escape violence.

Table 4.: What way does educational attainment lead to domestic violence against women in Egor Local Government?

S/N	Descriptive Statistics				
	Questions	**N**	**Total score**	**Mean**	**Decision**
9.	Couples with low educational attainment tend to experience domestic violence	374	1645.6	4.4	Positive
10.	Women with higher educational attainment are likely to have greater social mobility, which may enhance the ability to end or leave violent relationship	374	1787.72	4.78	Positive
11.	Quality of parent-child relationships has a big say in domestic violence among married couples	374	1690.48	4.52	Positive
12.	Education level of either partner is a determinant whether or not couple can handle issues that can result to domestic violence	374	1548.36	4.14	Positive
	Grand Mean			4.46	**Positive**

Source: Researcher's fieldwork survey, (2024)

The result shows that most of the respondents gave positive response to all items in table 4. Therefore, majority of the respondents agreed that Couples with low educational attainment tend to experience domestic violence; that women with higher educational attainment are likely to have greater social mobility, which may enhance the ability to end or leave violent relationship; that quality of parent-

child relationships has a big say in domestic violence among married couples and that the education level of either partner is a determinant whether or not couple can handle issues that can result to domestic violence.

Discussion of Findings

The study examined the socio-economic determinant of domestic Violence among Married Couples in Egor Local Government Area, Benin City, Edo State. The result showed that economic climate and employment conditions can often lead to domestic violence if not handled with care; that Inabilities to afford medical care and housing often leads to domestic violence; that domestic violence is a common occurrence in many families, countries and it transcends social, economic, religious and cultural groups and that economic dependence can contribute to women remaining in violent relationships.

The result also showed respondents agreed that violence against intimate partners frequently occur among married couples; that economic climate and employment conditions can often lead to domestic violence if not handled with care; that quality of parent-child relationships has a big say in domestic violence among married couples and that the education level of either partner is a determinant whether or not couple can handle issues that can result to domestic violence. The study reported that agreed that Couples with low educational attainment tend to experience domestic violence; that women with higher educational attainment are likely to have greater social mobility, which may enhance the ability to end or leave violent relationship; that quality of parent-child relationships has a big say in domestic violence among married couples and that the education level of either partner is a determinant whether or not couple can handle issues that can result to domestic violence

The study also revealed that the respondents agreed that there are many cases of violence against women; that the cases of violence against women is often reported to government authority; that domestic violence is on the increase and has often leads to divorce and that domestic violence against women often leads to poor child up-bringing in the family. The study also revealed that the respondents agreed that Social workers advocates for individuals affected by domestic violence; those social workers counsel individuals affected by domestic violence;

that it is believed that Social workers can help in welfare and women protection from domestic violence and that social workers can practice protection from domestic violence, without violating core values.

This agrees with the finding of Oguntayo, Oyeleke, Popoola, Opayemi, and Faworaja (2018), whose findings showed that economic factors leads to domestic violence against women, and recommended that government should provide palliative measures to curb low income earning among family by providing employment opportunities or sustainable programmes to alleviate poverty.

Conclusion

This study examined the socio-economic determinant of domestic violence among Married Couples in Egor Local Government Area, Benin City, Edo State. Responseswas obtained and gathered from 384 participants in Egor Local Government area of Edo state. The result also showed that religion is a major cultural influences that can affect many aspects of life of married couples. According to the study, domestic violence against women in Egor Local Government Area is a result of economic issues. The results of this study showed that couples' economic condition predicted domestic violence in Nigeria, as houses with poverty are more likely than wealthy homes to experience domestic violence against one another. It is more important to change women's social and economic status in society for women not be easily experience domestic violence in their homes. In essence, their socio-economic status remains as an obstacle and should be taken as a major factor for the development of women in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the finding the following recommendations were made.

i. There should be creation of a society free from domestic violence, the government should punish the offending spouse in order to dissuade others.
ii. The Government should also set up intervention facilities where couples may resolve their differences.
iii. Premarital education and counselling should be part of the secondary curriculum

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