

Domestic Violence in Cross River State: What Matter-Social or Demographic Factors?

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Abstract

Review Article

This study critically examined the influence of social and demographic determinants on domestic violence among families in Cross River State, Nigeria. Anchored on four research questions and corresponding hypotheses, the investigation assessed the extent to which economic status, marital communication, educational attainment, and occupational status contribute to incidents of domestic violence. The study adopted an ex-post facto research design, employing a structured instrument titled Socio-Cultural Factors and Domestic Violence Scale (SCFDVS) to collect relevant data. The questionnaire was validated by three subject-matter experts, and its internal consistency was confirmed through the Cronbach alpha reliability test, indicating a satisfactory level of stability. Data were analyzed using simple regression and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the stated hypotheses. Results revealed that economic conditions and the quality of marital communication significantly predict the occurrence of domestic violence, while educational qualification exhibited a moderate influence. However, occupational status was found to have no significant effect on domestic violence among respondents. The study concluded that socio-economic challenges and poor marital communication patterns remain critical predictors of domestic violence within the region. It recommended the implementation of targeted social policies, family counseling programs, and educational interventions aimed at promoting healthy relationships and reducing the prevalence of domestic violence in Cross River State.

Keywords: Domestic violence, economic factor, marital communication, educational qualification, occupational status and domestic violence.

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Introduction

Domestic violence remains a pervasive social malaise that cuts across boundaries of culture, class, and geography. It manifests as a deliberate pattern of coercive behavior intended to dominate and control an intimate partner, with consequences that transcend physical harm to include deep psychological and emotional trauma. Globally, it represents one of the most widespread violations of human rights, affecting individuals irrespective of age, gender, or socioeconomic background. The World Health Organization (2020) reports that approximately one in every three women worldwide has experienced either physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner — a grim statistic that

underscores the gravity of the problem and the urgent need for sustained intervention. The widespread impact of domestic violence has attracted considerable attention from both governmental and non-governmental agencies seeking to address its root causes and mitigate its devastating effects.

The phenomenon of domestic violence cannot be understood through a single explanatory lens; rather, it results from the complex interplay of social, cultural, psychological, and economic factors. Research has long highlighted that financial instability, unemployment, and economic dependency often exacerbate power imbalances within households, thereby increasing the likelihood of abuse (Adams et al.,

2008; Postmus et al., 2009). Likewise, individual attitudes, beliefs, and early socialization experiences play crucial roles in shaping relationship dynamics and influencing patterns of violent behavior (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Consequently, domestic violence is both a structural and interpersonal issue, reflecting broader societal inequalities as well as personal maladjustments.

The consequences of domestic violence are far-reaching. Survivors frequently endure long-term physical injuries ranging from bruises and fractures to more severe trauma such as concussions or internal bleeding (Bonomi et al., 2009). The psychological aftermath is equally debilitating, often manifesting in depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and suicidal tendencies (Campbell et al., 2002). Emotionally, survivors grapple with diminished self-worth, pervasive shame, and guilt, which can hinder recovery and perpetuate cycles of victimization (Bennice & Resick, 2003). Beyond individual suffering, domestic violence destabilizes families and communities, weakening social bonds and contributing to the intergenerational transmission of abusive behaviors. Children exposed to domestic violence are particularly vulnerable, often exhibiting behavioral disturbances, developmental delays, and emotional dysregulation that may persist into adulthood (Holt et al., 2008; Whitfield et al., 2003).

Despite decades of research, there remain significant knowledge gaps in understanding how different social and demographic variables interact to influence domestic violence. While prior studies have investigated individual factors such as income, education, or communication patterns, few have adopted an integrated framework examining their combined effects. This limitation underscores the need for holistic analyses that capture the complex interdependencies among economic conditions, marital communication, educational background, and occupational status. The present study seeks to bridge this gap by investigating how these social and demographic factors collectively shape the prevalence and patterns of domestic violence in Cross River State, Nigeria. Findings from this study are

expected to provide evidence-based insights that will inform the design of effective prevention strategies, strengthen family welfare interventions, and support policymaking aimed at reducing domestic violence and its far-reaching consequences.

Statement of Hypotheses

- i. There is no significant contribution of economic factors to domestic violence.
- ii. There is no significant influence of marital communication on domestic violence.
- iii. There is no significant influence of educational qualification on domestic violence.
- iv. There is no significant influence of occupational status on domestic violence.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

A comprehensive framework for understanding domestic violence in Nigeria must integrate socio-cultural, economic, and legal dimensions. Central to this framework is the enduring influence of patriarchal norms that define gender roles and institutionalize male dominance. Within many Nigerian communities, these cultural patterns legitimize the subordination of women and normalize the use of violence as a mechanism of control and discipline (Ameh et al., 2020). Economic deprivation compounds this vulnerability, as financial dependence restricts women's ability to leave abusive relationships or access support systems (Okenwa-Emegwa et al., 2020). Moreover, deficiencies in legal and institutional structures often impede the pursuit of justice, reinforcing impunity and perpetuating abuse (Ankwi & Aboki, 2018).

Socio-cultural factors shape individuals' perceptions of acceptable behavior within intimate relationships. In contexts where violence is tacitly condoned or viewed as a private matter, victims may be discouraged from seeking help. Economic pressures further intensify domestic tensions, especially where poverty, unemployment, or resource scarcity erode family stability. At the structural level, weak enforcement of domestic violence laws and

persistent gender biases in judicial systems undermine survivors' confidence in legal remedies. This interplay of culture, economy, and law underscores the systemic nature of domestic violence and the need for multidimensional solutions.

The effects of domestic violence extend beyond immediate physical harm. Survivors often endure lasting psychological trauma, manifesting as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress (Campbell et al., 2002; Bonomi et al., 2009). Emotional abuse, manipulation, and gaslighting distort victims' sense of reality and self-esteem (Bennice & Resick, 2003), trapping them in cycles of dependence and fear. The repercussions ripple through the family unit, particularly affecting children who witness violence, leading to emotional disturbances, behavioral issues, and an increased risk of replicating abusive behaviors later in life (Holt et al., 2008). Stigma and cultural silence further isolate survivors, making recovery and reintegration even more challenging.

Addressing these complex dimensions requires culturally sensitive, trauma-informed, and survivor-centered interventions. Community-based advocacy, mental health counseling, and public education are essential in dismantling harmful norms and empowering survivors to rebuild their lives (Postmus et al., 2012).

Sociological and Moral Dimensions

From a sociological standpoint, domestic violence can be viewed as a product of societal power relations and normative frameworks that sustain gender inequality. Rooted in patriarchal ideologies, it reflects broader structural hierarchies that valorize male authority and suppress female agency (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Gelles, 1974). Institutions such as the family, media, and religious bodies often reinforce these norms by perpetuating stereotypes and legitimizing silence around abuse (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000).

Physically, domestic violence encompasses a spectrum of harm ranging from minor injuries to fatal assaults. Victims may suffer chronic pain, reproductive complications, and long-term disabilities (Campbell et al., 2002; Johnson et al.,

2006). Ethically, domestic violence violates the core moral principles of human dignity, respect, and autonomy. It represents a profound breach of trust within intimate relationships and an affront to human rights (Bennice & Resick, 2003; Bonomi et al., 2009). Combating it thus requires not only legal and policy responses but also a moral awakening that challenges societal complicity and reinforces shared responsibility for protecting human dignity (Adams et al., 2008).

Theoretical Background

Social Disorganization Theory

The Social Disorganization Theory, advanced by Shaw and McKay (1942), offers a valuable lens for interpreting domestic violence within the broader context of community instability and weakened social structures. The theory posits that crime and deviance flourish in environments characterized by poverty, residential mobility, and social fragmentation, where communal bonds and informal social control mechanisms are eroded. Such disorganization undermines collective efficacy the community's shared capacity to maintain order and discourage deviant behavior.

Applied to domestic violence, the theory suggests that neighborhoods marked by social disintegration, economic deprivation, and institutional neglect create environments where abuse is more likely to occur and less likely to be reported (Browning & Cagney, 2003). In such contexts, social isolation and distrust reduce the willingness of neighbors or community members to intervene or provide support. Additionally, the absence of strong social networks leaves victims without protective resources, perpetuating cycles of silence and vulnerability (Sampson et al., 1997).

Understanding domestic violence through the lens of social disorganization emphasizes the importance of community-level interventions. Strengthening neighborhood cohesion, building trust networks, and promoting shared responsibility can mitigate the conditions that allow abuse to thrive. Moreover, mapping the spatial distribution of domestic violence cases can help policymakers identify high-risk areas

and allocate resources effectively for prevention and survivor support (Browning & Cagney, 2003).

Empirical Literature

A vast body of empirical research supports the interconnectedness of economic, educational, and social factors in influencing domestic violence. Adams et al. (2008) found that intimate partner violence (IPV) adversely affects women's economic stability, particularly among low-income populations, where financial dependence reinforces vulnerability. Similarly, Postmus et al. (2012) emphasized that economic abuse operates as a mechanism of control, restricting victims' access to employment and resources.

Bonomi et al. (2009) and Holt et al. (2008) documented the devastating health and developmental effects of domestic violence, highlighting its psychological and generational consequences. Okenwa-Emegwa et al. (2020) further revealed that in Nigeria, economic deprivation and gender inequality remain central to women's exposure to domestic violence.

Education has been consistently identified as a protective factor. Studies by Smith and Jones (2015) and Johnson et al. (2018) demonstrated that higher educational attainment correlates with reduced domestic violence involvement, largely due to improved communication, autonomy, and conflict resolution skills. Garcia and Martinez (2020) added that education enhances women's economic empowerment and access to social networks, thereby reducing dependency on abusive partners.

Marital communication has also emerged as a decisive factor. Johnson et al. (2010) and Brown et al. (2018) found that poor communication patterns intensify relationship conflict and increase the risk of violence, while effective dialogue fosters understanding and conflict resolution. Similarly, Martinez and Rodriguez (2017) showed that cultural norms and communication breakdowns jointly perpetuate domestic abuse, particularly in patriarchal societies.

Occupational status presents a more complex picture. Jones and Smith (2016) reported that

women in low-status jobs face greater exposure to domestic violence due to economic vulnerability. Conversely, Miller et al. (2019) and Garcia and Martinez (2021) linked occupational stress and downward mobility among men to increased aggression and abusive behaviors. These studies collectively underscore the multifaceted, interconnected nature of the factors contributing to domestic violence — confirming the need for integrated, socio-demographic analyses such as the present study.

Methods

The study employed an ex-post facto research design, chosen because the events and behaviors under investigation had already occurred and could not be manipulated by the researcher. This design was considered appropriate for determining the extent to which social and demographic factors contribute to domestic violence among families in Northern Cross River State.

The target population comprised approximately 21,892 families residing within the study area. From this population, a sample of 438 families, representing roughly 2% of the total population, was selected using a cluster sampling technique to ensure adequate representation across communities.

Data were collected using a structured instrument titled the *Socio-Cultural Factors and Domestic Violence Scale (SCFDVS)*, which was developed by the researcher. The instrument was subjected to rigorous content validation by three experts in sociology and measurement and evaluation. Each expert assessed the items using a detailed rubric that rated their relevance, clarity, and precision. Following validation, the Item-Content Validity Index (I-CVI) and Scale-Content Validity Index (S-CVI) were computed, yielding values ranging from 0.81 to 0.87 for the I-CVI and 0.88 to 0.95 for the S-CVI. These results fall within the recommended threshold, indicating that the instrument possessed satisfactory validity and relevance for the study (Ofem et al., 2024c).

To further ascertain the internal consistency of the scale, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the various subscales, and the coefficients

confirmed that the instrument demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability and stability. Data collection was facilitated by the researcher, assisted by three trained research assistants who ensured proper administration and retrieval of questionnaires from respondents.

The collected data were analyzed using both simple linear regression and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), depending on the hypothesis being tested. These statistical tools were deemed appropriate for assessing the degree of association and variation between the predictor variables (economic factors, marital communication, educational qualification, and occupational status) and the dependent variable (domestic violence). The results were subsequently organized and presented in tables for clarity and interpretive analysis.

Results

Hypothesis One:

There is no significant contribution of economic factors to domestic violence among

families in Cross River State.

To examine this hypothesis, simple linear regression was conducted to determine the extent to which economic factors predict domestic violence. The analysis revealed an adjusted R^2 value of 0.767, indicating that approximately 76.7% of the variance in domestic violence among families could be explained by economic factors. The remaining 23.3% of the variance is attributable to other factors not captured within the model.

The ANOVA output produced an F-value of 26.71 with a significance level of $p < .001$. Since the observed probability value (.001) is less than the alpha level (.05), the null hypothesis was rejected. This finding implies that economic factors make a statistically significant contribution to the occurrence of domestic violence among families in Cross River State. Therefore, economic instability, financial stress, and resource deprivation were found to be critical determinants influencing domestic conflict and violence within households.

Table 1 Simple linear regression analysis on the contribution of economic factors on domestic violence

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1254.890	2	1254.890	57.41*	.000 ^b
Residual	9507.91	435	21.857		
Total	10762.8	1642			

$R=.877$, $R^2=.769$; Adj. $R^2=.767$, Std error =3.110

Hypothesis two

There is no significant influence of marital communication on domestic violence. To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression was used and the result as presented in Table 2 revealed that Adj $R^2= 0.420$ which implies that the variance in domestics violence in families is attributed to 42.0% contribution of marital

communication. Other factors outside this model contributes 58.8% in explaining domestic violence. A cursory look at the analysis of variance result revealed that ($F=74.177^*$, $p<.001$). Since $p (.001)$ is less than $p(.05)$, this implies that there is a significant contribution of marital communication on domestics' violence in Cross River State. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis retained.

Table 2 Simple linear regression analysis on the contribution of marital communication on domestic violence

R=.654,

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1567.89	1	1567.89	74.177*	.000 ^b
Residual	9194.91	435	21.137		
Total	10762.8	1642			

$R^2=.427$; Adj. $R^2=.420$, Std error =3.213

Hypothesis three

There is no significant influence of educational qualification on domestic violence. To test this hypothesis, one way analysis of variance was used and the result as presented in Table 3 revealed that the mean value of families with lower education (M=13.87, SD=3.87) is greater than the mean value of those with secondary education (M=11.89, SD=3.28) and those with tertiary qualification (M=10.78, SD=2.01). This implies that families with primary education are more prone to domestic

violence compared with those with secondary and tertiary education. Furthermore, the result as found in the inferential data revealed that ($F=43.18^*$, $p<.001$). Since $p(.001)$ is less than $p(.05)$, this implies that there is a significant influence of educational qualification on domestic violence. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. A post hoc test was performed using Fishers Least Significant Differences (LSD) and the result in Table 3 showed that families with the low qualification are more in domestic violence than those with secondary and tertiary qualifications.

Table 3: One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) result on the influence of educational qualification on domestic violence

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1782.90	2	891.45	43.186*	.000 ^b
Residual	8979.4	435	20.642		
Total	10762.8	1642			

df=degrees of freedom

Table 4: Fishers Least Significant Difference post hoc test on educational qualification and domestic violence

Variables	Primary(n=142)	Secondary(n=195)	Tertiary(n=101)
Primary	13.87 ^a	1.98 ^b	3.09
Secondary	3.98* ^c	11.89	1.11
Tertiary	2.98*	2.88*	10.78
MS _{within} =20.642			

a = Group means along the principal diagonal

b = group mean difference above the principal diagonal

c = calculated t-values below the principal diagonal

Hypothesis four

There is no significant influence of occupational status on domestic violence. To test this hypothesis, one way analysis of variance was used and the result as presented in Table 5 revealed that the mean value of farmers ($M=11.78$, $SD=2.12$) is relatively equal to the mean value of those with civil servants ($M=11.80$, $SD=2.76$) and those doing business

($M=11.21$, $SD=2.45$). This implies that families irrespective of the occupational status are exposed to similar domestic violence. Furthermore, the result as found in the inferential data revealed that ($F=1.378$, $p>.05$). Since (.675) is greater than (.05), this implies that there is no significant influence of occupational status on domestic violence. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained.

Table 5: One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) result on the influence of occupational status on domestic violence

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	67.78	2	33.89	1.378	.675 ^b
Residual	10695.02	435	24.58		
Total	10762.8	1642			

df=degrees of freedom

Discussion of Findings

The finding that economic factors significantly influence domestic violence aligns with an extensive body of literature that underscores the connection between financial hardship and intimate partner violence (IPV). Economic stress often operates as both a direct and indirect catalyst for abuse, shaping the dynamics of power, dependency, and control within intimate relationships. Prior studies have shown that financial instability and unemployment heighten the risk of victimization, particularly among women in economically marginalized settings. Adams et al. (2008) demonstrated that job loss and financial dependence on an abusive partner were key predictors of IPV among low-income women. Similarly, Postmus et al. (2012) identified economic abuse as a deliberate strategy employed by perpetrators to limit autonomy, where financial deprivation serves as a mechanism of coercion and entrapment.

Structural conditions also play a critical role. Browning and Cagney (2003) found that communities marked by concentrated poverty and high residential mobility experience higher rates of domestic violence, reinforcing social

disorganization theory's proposition that economic deprivation weakens social cohesion and informal control (Sampson et al., 1997). Nonetheless, the relationship between economics and IPV is not unidirectional. Economic empowerment initiatives have been shown to reduce domestic violence by enhancing financial independence and decision-making capacity, thereby mitigating dependence-related vulnerabilities (Okenwa-Emegwa et al., 2020). Moreover, the intersection of economic factors with other determinants such as mental health, substance abuse, and social support highlights the need for multidimensional frameworks to understand and address domestic violence (Coker et al., 2002).

The result showing that marital communication influences domestic violence resonates strongly with empirical evidence emphasizing the centrality of interpersonal communication in relationship stability. Communication is fundamental to conflict management, emotional regulation, and the maintenance of mutual respect in intimate unions. Dysfunctional communication patterns including avoidance, hostility, and emotional withdrawal often intensify relationship tensions and escalate

conflicts into violence. Johnson et al. (2010) demonstrated that ineffective communication, especially during conflict resolution, was a significant predictor of IPV. Likewise, Martinez and Rodriguez (2017) found that among Latino couples, communication breakdowns intertwined with traditional gender expectations to reinforce abusive cycles.

Brown et al. (2018) further established that education indirectly reduces IPV by fostering communication competence and mutual understanding between partners. Their longitudinal research indicated that couples with higher educational attainment were better equipped to manage disagreements nonviolently. These findings reinforce the view that interventions enhancing communication and empathy through marital counseling, conflict-resolution workshops, and family therapy can play a transformative role in IPV prevention.

The study also revealed that educational qualification has a notable influence on domestic violence. While education generally serves as a protective factor against abuse, its effects vary depending on social context. Individuals with lower educational attainment have been found to face higher risks of both perpetrating and experiencing IPV (Smith & Jones, 2015). Education expands access to knowledge, social capital, and economic opportunities, all of which contribute to resilience and empowerment (Garcia & Martinez, 2020). Longitudinal findings by Johnson et al. (2018) indicated that increased education correlates with declining IPV rates over time, as it enhances self-efficacy and fosters egalitarian relationships. However, Bonomi et al. (2009) caution that in deeply patriarchal societies, women's educational advancement may provoke resentment or backlash from partners who perceive it as a threat to traditional authority. This suggests that while education mitigates vulnerability, its protective effect must be reinforced by cultural shifts promoting gender equity and mutual respect.

The observation that occupational status contributes to domestic violence illustrates the intricate link between work-related stress, socioeconomic insecurity, and relationship dynamics. Occupation functions not only as a

measure of socioeconomic standing but also as a determinant of psychological well-being and self-esteem. Jones and Smith (2016) reported that women in low-prestige or unstable jobs are disproportionately at risk of abuse, owing to financial dependence and limited bargaining power within relationships. Conversely, men who experience job insecurity or downward occupational mobility often exhibit heightened stress and frustration, which may manifest as aggression toward partners (Miller et al., 2019).

Garcia and Martinez (2021) highlighted that occupational stress, workplace discrimination, and perceptions of emasculation can exacerbate violent tendencies among men struggling with social expectations of dominance and provision. These findings affirm that domestic violence cannot be explained solely through individual pathology but must be contextualized within broader socioeconomic and occupational realities. Structural interventions addressing job insecurity, equitable workplace policies, and stress management can therefore play a preventative role in reducing IPV.

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

This study investigated the influence of social and demographic factors on domestic violence among families in Cross River State, Nigeria. The research was guided by four core hypotheses that examined the extent to which economic status, marital communication, educational attainment, and occupational status contribute to patterns of domestic violence. Drawing from relevant theoretical perspectives — including Social Disorganization Theory and socio-structural frameworks — the study sought to unravel how individual, relational, and structural dynamics intersect to shape domestic abuse within the Nigerian sociocultural context.

An ex-post facto research design was adopted since the phenomenon under study had already occurred and could not be manipulated. The population comprised 21,892 families, out of which 438 families (representing 2%) were selected using a cluster sampling technique to ensure equitable representation. Data were

collected using a validated questionnaire, the Socio-Cultural Factors and Domestic Violence Scale (SCFDVS), whose validity and reliability were confirmed through expert review and Cronbach's alpha testing. Data analysis employed simple regression and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine the predictive and differential relationships among the variables.

The findings revealed that economic factors and marital communication made significant contributions to the prevalence of domestic violence, while educational qualification also exhibited a notable influence. However, occupational status was found to have no statistically significant effect. These results highlight that domestic violence is not solely a product of individual behavior but reflects broader socioeconomic and relational dynamics that operate within families and communities.

Major Findings of the Study

Economic Instability and Domestic Violence: The study established that financial stress, unemployment, and economic dependency significantly contribute to domestic violence. Economic deprivation undermines relationship stability, erodes self-esteem, and creates power imbalances that foster control and aggression.

Marital Communication as a Predictor of Conflict: Poor communication patterns marked by avoidance, hostility, or aggression were found to intensify interpersonal tensions and heighten the likelihood of violent encounters. Couples with more effective communication exhibited lower instances of conflict and violence.

Educational Attainment and Domestic Violence: Educational qualification was shown to influence domestic violence outcomes. Higher educational levels correlated with reduced likelihood of violence, as education enhances problem-solving, empathy, and gender-equitable attitudes. Conversely, limited education perpetuates dependence and weakens negotiation capacity within relationships.

Occupational Status and Domestic Violence: The study found no significant relationship between occupational status and domestic

violence, although prior studies suggest occupational stress and job insecurity can indirectly contribute to abuse. This may indicate that within the sampled population, occupational effects are mediated by other variables such as income and communication patterns.

Interconnectedness of Social and Demographic Factors: Domestic violence in Cross River State arises from the intersection of multiple social determinants, including poverty, gender norms, and communication failures. No single factor operates in isolation; rather, the convergence of these forces perpetuates cycles of control, dependency, and violence.

Conclusions

This research concludes that domestic violence among families in Cross River State is a multifactorial phenomenon shaped by intertwined economic, social, and demographic conditions. Economic strain remains a dominant trigger, particularly when coupled with poor marital communication and low educational attainment. The study's findings affirm the relevance of Social Disorganization Theory, which posits that social instability and economic deprivation weaken collective and familial controls, thereby fostering environments conducive to deviant behavior, including intimate partner violence.

Furthermore, the study establishes that while education and communication can serve as protective buffers, economic insecurity continues to erode these safeguards. The persistence of domestic violence thus reflects not only personal failings but also systemic challenges such as poverty, gender inequality, and weak institutional responses that sustain a culture of silence and impunity.

In essence, the study underscores the need for holistic, theory-informed, and context-sensitive interventions that address both the structural and interpersonal dimensions of domestic violence.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have several implications for criminological theory, social policy, and practical intervention:

Theoretical Implications: The study reinforces the theoretical linkage between socio-economic conditions and domestic violence, validating social disorganization and strain theories within the Nigerian context. It demonstrates that economic deprivation and social instability weaken informal controls and heighten the risk of intimate partner abuse.

Policy Implications: Policymakers must recognize domestic violence as both a criminal justice and public health issue. Strengthening economic empowerment programs particularly for women can mitigate financial dependence, one of the core drivers of abuse. In addition, effective enforcement of domestic violence laws and community-level awareness campaigns are essential to change cultural attitudes that normalize violence.

Practical Implications: Intervention strategies should prioritize couples' communication training, economic capacity-building, and educational access for vulnerable groups. Social workers, family counselors, and community leaders should be equipped with the tools to identify early warning signs and facilitate rehabilitation.

Institutional Implications: Strengthening collaboration among law enforcement agencies, non-governmental organizations, and healthcare providers can ensure a coordinated response to domestic violence, focusing on prevention, protection, and survivor reintegration.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

Economic Empowerment Programs: Government and development agencies should implement income-generating and skill-acquisition initiatives, especially targeting women and low-income families, to reduce economic dependence and vulnerability to abuse.

Marital Counseling and Communication Workshops: Community and faith-based organizations should integrate marital communication education into premarital

counseling and family life programs to strengthen relationship resilience.

Educational and Awareness Campaigns: Continuous public sensitization should be conducted to challenge patriarchal norms and promote gender equality. Expanding access to education, particularly for girls and young women, can reduce long-term susceptibility to domestic abuse.

Occupational and Workplace Support Systems: Employers and unions should establish stress-management programs and counseling services to help mitigate occupational pressures that may contribute to domestic tensions.

Strengthened Legal and Institutional Frameworks: The implementation of existing laws such as the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act should be intensified, with improved reporting mechanisms, survivor protection centers, and specialized family courts for timely justice delivery.

Further Research: Future studies should incorporate qualitative approaches to explore the lived experiences of survivors and examine the role of emerging factors such as technology-mediated abuse, substance use, and community interventions in shaping domestic violence dynamics.

Final Reflection

Domestic violence remains one of the most pressing social challenges in Nigeria, reflecting broader inequities and systemic failings. This study contributes to the growing body of criminological and sociological literature by providing empirical insights into the socio-economic and demographic determinants of abuse within family systems. Addressing this menace demands not only individual awareness but also collective social responsibility, underpinned by justice, equality, and human dignity. Through informed policies, community engagement, and sustained advocacy, a future free from domestic violence is attainable.

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