

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG MARRIED COUPLES:
ISSUES AND EFFECTS
(A CASE STUDY OF EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EDO STATE,
NIGERIA)**



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BENIN CITY

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BY

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
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OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.Sc.) IN SOCIOLOGY AND
ANTHROPOLOGY**

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research project was carried out by **Tessy Okpako**, Matriculation Number **SSC2105963**, a student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Sociology and Anthropology.

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Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty for His divine guidance, protection, and strength throughout the course of this research. It is also dedicated to my family and loved ones for their endless support, encouragement, and prayers that made this work a success.

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ABSTRACT

Domestic violence has become one of the most persistent social problems affecting homes and families in Nigeria and across the world. It occurs when one partner in an intimate relationship uses power, control, or force to dominate the other through physical, emotional, sexual, psychological, or economic abuse. This study examined domestic violence within married couples, using Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria as a case study. The main objectives of the study were to find out whether domestic violence is common among married couples, identify its causes, examine its effects, and determine possible solutions to reduce it within the study area. The research adopted a survey research design using structured questionnaires as the main instrument for data collection. A total of one hundred (100) questionnaires were distributed, out of which ninety-nine (99) were retrieved and analyzed using simple percentages and frequency tables.

The findings revealed that domestic violence is indeed common among married couples in Egor L.G.A. Major causes identified include poverty, poor communication, infidelity, drug and alcohol abuse, and cultural beliefs that promote male dominance. The most common forms of violence reported were physical abuse, emotional or verbal abuse, and financial abuse. The effects of domestic violence were found to include emotional trauma, depression, marital instability, loss of trust, and fear and insecurity, which greatly affect not only the victims but also their children and the community at large. The study concludes that domestic violence remains a serious social and public health concern that threatens the peace and stability of families. It recommends that government and non-governmental organizations should work together to promote public awareness, counseling services, economic empowerment programs, and stricter legal actions against offenders. It also suggests that premarital and marital counseling, as well as educational campaigns, should be encouraged to promote understanding and communication between couples and reduce domestic violence in homes.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Domestic violence is a serious problem which has been in existence for decades and still continues to persist. Domestic violence occurs all over the world, it happens in every society affecting both homes and families of people and sadly, has shown no signs of stopping. Many people today, faces domestic violence in their homes regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or race. Men, women and children can be violated and abused.

According to Fareo (2015) domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behaviour in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. Oxford Dictionary Of Law (2018) opined that domestic violence is any incident of violence, threatening behaviour, or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. Domestic violence occurs when one person tries to dominate and control another person in a family-like or domestic relationships, it involves an abuse of power and can take any form i.e physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, threats of abuse, manipulation, stalking and intimidation, e.t.c.

Family is often considered a place where one receives love, respects and care. However these features of the family is shattered by a brutal reality called domestic violence. Many couples today experiences domestic violence in their homes, many die while enduring the pains and sufferings while some refuse to leave because of fear of leaving their children behind or ashamed

of being laughed out or mocked by the people in the society. World Health Organization (2021) conducted an analysis, covering data from 2000 to 2018 across 161 countries, revealed that nearly 30% of women worldwide have experienced physical and sexual violence from an intimate partner or non-partner.

Among women aged 15-49 who have been in relationships, over a quarter of women have faced such violence at least once in their lifetime. The prevalence of intimate partner violence varies by region, with estimates ranging from 20% in the Western Pacific to 33% in the African and South-East Asia regions. Additionally, 38% of all murders of women globally are committed by intimate partners, and about 6% of women report being sexually assaulted by someone other than a partner, though data on non-partner sexual violence is less comprehensive. Domestic violence is predominantly caused by men against women, but it can also be the other way round, women can also be perpetrators of violence on men. In some cases, women exhibit manipulative and paranoid behavior to control and abuse their husbands, causing fear, depression, anxiety and insecurities. Intimate partner violence (IPV) against men is generally less recognized by society than intimate partner violence against women. Men are less likely to report domestic violence than women because they fear that they might not be believed and being falsely accused of being the abuser. Men abused by women don't all fight back, they believe that a strong man is non-violent (Emmanuel Rowlands 2024). Many married couples face these challenges, in one way or another they are being violated and abused in some ways. Some married men are abused in their homes by their wives just because the wife is richer and powerful in terms of strength

Domestic violence among married couples, also called intimate partner violence (IPV), is either caused by the man or the woman in the relationship by exacting power and control over the other

by saying hurtful and insulting words to control and manipulate the other. Relationships may start perfectly in the early stages, but later on, it can become violent and abusive. Sometimes the abuser might apologize for being wrong and promise not to do it again but their behavior often continues. Signs of an abusive partner include insults, name-calling, physical violence, threats, isolation from family members or friends, gets angry or abusive when drinking alcohol or using drugs, Forces you to have sex or engage in sexual acts against your will etc.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) can have a huge effect on its victim, it could cause psychological, emotional stress on them, which could lead to exposure to traumatic events, fear and isolation, depression and suicidal thoughts or behavior. Intimate partner violence (IPV) has been found to be associated with poor physical health including poor functional health, somatic disorders, chronic disorders and chronic pain, gynaecological problems, and an increased risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Additionally, a history of sexual abuse and violence has been linked to a higher risk of HIV infection (Dillon, Hussain, et. Al 2013). Survivors of domestic violence may internalize verbal abuse from their partner. They may blame themselves for their situation or feel anger and resentment toward themselves.

The research study explores domestic violence within married couples, a specific form of intimate partner violence (IPV).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Domestic violence among married couples also known as intimate partner violence (IPV) is a social issue that needs to be addressed, this includes both husband abusing wife and wife abusing husband. Despite the growing awareness of domestic violence, abuse within marriages still

seems to persist and often gets overlooked most especially when men are the victims. Intimate partner violence occurs both privately and publicly, often leaving a deep emotional scar that can last on the victim's memory for a very long time and in some unfortunate cases, it can result in murder.

Globally, 81,000 women and girls were killed in 2020, with around 58% of them murdered by intimate partners or family members. UN Women (2022). Many women today experience domestic violence in their homes without recognizing it, they get raped or deprived of sexual intimacy by their partners and these act can lead to lower level of satisfaction and intimacy in the relationship. Data from World Health Organization (2021), revealed that one in three women worldwide experiences physical or sexual violence, primarily from an intimate partner. Furthermore, domestic violence and rape contribute to the loss of health in women aged 15-44 years more than diseases such as breast and uterine cancer, painful childbirth, and accidents, it also harms women's safety and mental health (Panabad, Gholamzadeh Jofreh, Asgari, & Kazemian-Moghaddam, 2023).

According to World Health Organization (2001), Mental health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Mental health is the ability of an individual to think clearly, behave appropriately, and carry out daily activities effectively. National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2020) shows that 85% of victims report emotional abuse, and around 60% suffer from mental health conditions like depression or anxiety.

Domestic violence greatly has an impacts not only on the mental health of the victims but also the well-being of their children and families. It has been linked to depression, anxiety disorder,

emotional stress, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Low self-esteem and self worth, suicidal thoughts and behavior, substance abuse, Isolation and many other psychological disorders. Given the significant effects of domestic violence, this study aims to examine its causes, effects and possible solutions within married couples in Egor Local Government Area.

1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the study is to thoroughly investigate domestic violence among married couples in Egor LGA Of Edo state, Nigeria.

To:

1. To find out if domestic violence is common among couples in Egor L.G.A of Edo state.
2. To identify the causes of domestic violence among married couples in Egor L.G.A of Edo state.
3. To examine the effects of domestic violence among married couples in Egor L.G.A of Edo state.
4. To determine some of the possible solutions to reduce domestic violence among married couples in Egor L.G.A of Edo state.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions will aid In generating data for the study

1. Is domestic violence common among couples in Egor Local Government Area?
2. What are the possible causes of domestic violence?

3.What are the effects of domestic violence ?

4.What are the possible solutions to reduce domestic violence?

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is focused on thoroughly examining the physical, social, sexual, psychological and emotional impacts of domestic violence among married couples as well as it's causes, addressing both male and female victims. It also aims to educate and enlighten couples on how to find possible solutions in reducing domestic violence within the homes. This research study will be conducted in Egor Local Government Area located in Benin City Edo state Nigeria.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the research study lies in it's potential to contribute meaningfully on the ongoing discourse. The study's findings will contribute and help deepen the understanding of the complexities of domestic violence. The study aims to raise awareness on the physical, social, psychological and emotional causes and effects of domestic violence among married couples. The research will contribute and provide insights to existing literature, inform policy formulation and provide solutions to stop domestic violence.

The study intends to inform and enlighten married couples, families, counselors, educators, policy makers and the world at large on the root causes and consequences of domestic violence and how possible solutions like educational programs, intervention strategies and government policies would help in reducing domestic violence in homes. It will also educate individuals and communities on the roles they need to play for the effective and efficient demotion and reduction of domestic violence displayed among them.

Moreover, this study used Egor Local Government Area in Benin city, Edo state Nigeria as the geographical area to conduct the research offering localized insights and broader solutions to domestic violence.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.Domestic Violence: An abusive behaviour in which one individual gains power over another individual.

2.Intimate partner violence (IPV): This is an abuse or aggression that occurs in a romantic relationship. Intimate partner refers to both current and former spouses and dating partners. Intimate partner violence typically includes sexual or physical violence, psychological aggression, and stalking. This may include former or current intimate partners.

3.Physical Abuse: Physical abuse is an act where one person uses their body in order to inflict intentional harm or injury upon another person.

4.Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse is when someone repeatedly tries to make another person feel bad or doubt themselves.

5.Psychological Abuse:This form of abuse is a behaviour that aims to cause emotional or mental harm.

6. Sexual Abuse: The act of making someone take part in sexual activities, against their wishes, or without their consent.

7.Perpetrator:The individual who commits or initiates acts of domestic violence.

8. Victim/Survivor: The person who suffers or is affected by domestic violence.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Why do some marriages fail? Why do domestic violence persist in marriages even when it began with love and happiness? What happens to the victims involved in domestic violence? These are questions which have been asked by many and have prompted research across various disciplines. This chapter reviews existing literature that explores the underlying issues and effects of domestic violence among married couples, focusing on patterns, causes and effects.

2.1 OVERVIEW OF ISSUES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG MARRIED COUPLES

Marriage which is supposed to be guided and protected by love and unity, unfortunately, is being broken and destroyed by the harsh reality of domestic violence. It continues to prevail despite the attention given to it by different scholars, educators, counselors, policymakers and human rights advocates and it remains one of the worst forms of oppression faced by women. Marital violence has been recognized globally as a grave public health concern with devastating consequences affecting the physical, reproductive, sexual and psychological health of women Bhat and Ullman (2014).

Domestic violence is a social issue that cut across all genders, races, ethnicities, religions and social classes and which is present in so many marriages affecting both men and women most

especially the women. The World Health Organization (2021) conducted an analysis, covering data from 2000 to 2018 across 161 countries, revealed that nearly 30% of women worldwide have experienced physical and sexual violence from an intimate partner or non partner. Stephenson et al. (2006), opined that the physical risk caused by trauma of physical and sexual violence may result in gynecology morbidity. In addition, sexual violence may cause vaginal, anal or urethral trauma leading to an elevated risk of infection.

According to (Vindhya, 2000; Ahmed-Ghosh, 2004; Krishnan 2005a; 2005b; Panchanadeswaran & Koverola 2005) violence against women (VAW) has been recognized as a global public health concern that varies in severity, type and impact on women. A lot of married women today, faces marital violence in their homes but choose not to speak up or leave not because they don't want to but because society and culture make it so hard to do. Most societies and cultures idolized and treats marriage like a sacred badge of honour, refusing to see the flaws in marriages filled with violence, society still insist on every women to stay in their marriages and shouldn't seek for divorce despite the challenges and sufferings they are facing. As Ilika (2005), Ishola (2016) Ofeibea-Aboagye (1994) and Oluremi (2015) mentioned that in African societies, violence within marriages is perceived as a private issue of marital affairs and women have been socialized to accept and endure in silence. In countries like Nigeria, cultural norms has made and accepted domestic violence as part of women's life. Socio-cultural practices such as norms about marriage system, the predominant position of male children, and forced marriage, have exposed women to domestic violence in Nigeria (Alesina, Brioschi, & Ferrara, 2016; Chika, 2012; Linos, Slopen, Subramanian, Berkman, & Kawachi, 2013). To tackle the harmful effects of violence on women and the society, there is urgent need to challenge this social structure and cultural practices at all level. Abdullahi, Cusairi & Abdullah (2017).

Though, domestic violence is common among women, it is also prevalent among men. As portrayed earlier on, domestic violence can happen to both genders often inflicting emotional and physical harm on the victim. Luprin and Grandin (2004) "Male abuse" refers to any act carried out by a woman with the intention, or perceived intention, of causing physical injury, intimidation or emotional pain to her intimate male partner. Intimate partner violence (IPV) against men is generally less recognized by society than intimate partner violence against women, which can act as a further block to men reporting their situation or otherwise seeking help. Studies have shown that men do experience abuse in intimate relationships though it's less recognized and hardly spoken out or reported.

While domestic violence is more commonly reported by women, study also shows that women can also be perpetrators of abuse against men. Some men report being physically, emotionally, or psychologically abused by their wives due to perceived inadequate masculinity or financial power to lead the family as its head. Statistics show that men also experience intimate partner violence (IPV) at notable rates. Two studies released in 2012 indicated that men experienced IPV at rates similar to women-8% per year in one study and 11% per year in the other (Lovestad and Krantz, 2012; Nybergh et al., 2012). Additionally, approximately 24.4% of men experienced minor IPV, and 7.6% experienced several assaults across 32 nations. Straus(2006).

Domestic violence often leaves more than just physical scars, it deeply affects a person mental and emotional well-being. Victims may struggle with persistent low self-esteem, anxiety, and chronic stress, which can worsen over time if not stopped. These emotional struggles don't just affect the individual but also damage communication and connection within the marriage, often leading to deeper conflict and distance between partners. Such emotional and psychological

effects can lead to ongoing tension in relationships, making it harder for couples to resolve issues or rebuild trust. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (2012), Individuals who are subjected to IPV may have lifelong consequences, including emotional trauma, lasting physical impairment, chronic health problems, and even death.

2.2 Patterns of Domestic Violence

Johnson (2008) as cited by Durfee (2011) argues that whether domestic violence is a unitary phenomenon or whether there are multiple forms of domestic violence, it is essential to distinguish between them. He identified three main types of intimate partner violence (IPV) based on patterns of control and use of violence in relationships. These are:

1. Intimate Terrorism (IT)

This type is about control. One partner uses violence along with other tactics like threats, isolation, or emotional abuse to gain and keep control over the other. It's not just about a fight, it's a pattern meant to dominate the other person, and it's usually one-sided. This may also involve emotional and psychologically abuse

2. Violent Resistance (VR)

This happens when a person being abused fights back, it is sometimes thought of as 'Self defense'. The violence is a reaction to being hurt or threatened, usually by someone who is an intimate terrorist (perpetrator).

3. Situational Couple Violence (SCV)

This kind happens when arguments between partners get out of hand and turn physical. It's not about control or dominance, but rather poor conflict management. Both partners might be involved, and it usually doesn't follow a consistent pattern like intimate terrorism.

According to Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a pattern of assaultive behavior and coercive behavior that may include physical injury, psychologic abuse, sexual assault, progressive isolation, stalking, deprivation, intimidation, and reproductive coercion. Forms and manifestation of violence against women can look very different depending on the cultural, social, political, and economic conditions of a society. As communities go through changes like shifts in population, economic systems, or social values, certain forms of violence may become more visible or widespread, while others may gradually decline. This shows that violence against women isn't a fixed issue; it evolves along with the societies in which it occurs (United Nations, 2006).

2.3 Types Of Domestic Violence

1. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person or a group of community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation (World Health Organization, 2002). Physical abuse refers to the use of physical force that causes harm to the body, such as hitting, kicking, or burning. It can include injuries that are intentional or the result of reckless behavior. It is characterized by the intent to control, harm, or intimidate another

person. This type of abuse is often associated with other forms of maltreatment, such as emotional abuse or neglect. (Devries et al., 2016). It can also include physical injuries on the victim's children or pets in order to cause psychological harm (Romans et al., 2010).

2. Sexual Abuse and Sexual Assault

sexual abuse, is any act of sexual contact that a person suffers, submits to, participates in, or performs as a result of force or violence, threats, fear, or deception or without having legally consented to the act. It encompasses any intentional touching, fondling, or penetration of intimate parts of the victim's body by the perpetrator for the purpose of arousing or satisfying the perpetrator's sexual desires or as a means of degrading, humiliating, or punishing the victim.

Sexual assault, usually involves a series of acts of criminal sexual contact committed by a single perpetrator (or group of perpetrators) over a prolonged period, whereas the latter usually consists of a particular act committed by a perpetrator (or group of perpetrators) against a single person. Sexual abuse also frequently consists of crimes against minors or children by a perpetrator who is acquainted with the victims or is viewed by them as a figure of authority as an older family member or relative, teachers, coaches, doctors, employers, and others (Duignan, 2025)

3. Emotional Abuse or psychological Abuse

Emotional abuse is when someone uses words, actions, or behaviors to control, manipulate, or hurt another person emotionally.

According to Slabbert and Green (2014), emotional abuse can also be seen as psychological or mental abuse which can be verbal or non-verbal. It is persistent and corrosive, destroying self-worth and self-esteem. This type of abuse usually includes the use of ridicule, insults,

accusations, infidelity and ignoring one's partner, all of which result in the breaking down of the victim's self-esteem and self-worth. Any kind of non physical abuse impose from one person to another. Victims of emotional violence subjected to repeated threats, manipulation, intimidation and isolation that cause them to feel fear, anxiety, self-blame and worthlessness (Stark, 2015).

Emotional abuse break down a person's emotional well-being and create a power of imbalance, leaving the victim feeling powerless, anxious, or afraid. Emotional violence can be just as damaging as physical violence, even though it's often harder to recognize.

4. Financial Abuse

In this type of abuse, the perpetrator or abuser controls or manipulates the victim or abused money, assets or financial resources without the victims approval. This type of abuse may involve restricting or preventing the owner access to their own bank accountd, limiting or preventing the victim from working or forcing them to hand over their income.The abuser uses financial control as a means of power, making the victim financially dependent and isolated.

Financial abuse is a serious issue that involves controlling or limiting someone's access to their own money and resources. According to Adams (2007), it can happen when someone is prevented from working or is forced to give up their income. It can also involve manipulation of financial decisions that make a person dependent on someone else. Loring and Loring (2005) describe it as a form of control where one partner restricts the other's access to money, using it to maintain power in the relationship. Stark (2015) notes that financial abuse is often a deliberate tactic used by abusers to prevent the victim from accessing their own income. It can lead to isolation from financial support systems as well.

Financial abuse is a sneaky form of control that can really affect someone. It's when someone uses money to hold power over another person and make them feel like they can't leave the relationship. At its core, financial abuse is more about control than money itself. The abuser might not let their partner have any money, make them give up their job, or even use their partner's money to pay for their own stuff. It's all about making the victim feel dependent on the abuser. And that can make it really hard to get out of that situation. In the end, financial abuse is about control, plain and simple. The abuser uses money to try to dominate the victim. That's why it's so important to recognize the signs of financial abuse and get help if you need it.

2.4 Causes of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a deeply complex issue, shaped by a mix of different factors. It's important to understand that there's no single reason why abuse happens. Instead, a combination of personal, relational, societal, and cultural influences can play a role. Why do some people become domestic abusers? The answer is complicated and complex. By recognizing these underlying causes, we can better address and prevent domestic violence.

1. Power and Control

The power and control model of domestic violence focuses on how abusers use various tactics to gain and maintain control over their partners. This model shows that the behavior of abusers is not random or haphazard, but rather purposeful and systematic. The ultimate goal of the abuser's behavior is to exert control over their partner, which reflects their belief that they have a right and entitlement to control their intimate partner. This control issue often leads to a cycle where

the victim feels trapped, unable to escape due to fear, dependency, or confusion about the severity of the situation.

According to Pence and Paymar (1993), the various forms of abuse that the abuser uses are all tactics of control, and they emphasize how these behaviors are interconnected within a larger framework of domination. The abuser may employ a range of tactics such as using children, coercion and threats, intimidation, emotional abuse, male privilege and isolation, all designed to reinforce their control over the victims.

2. Jealousy and Possessiveness

Psychological traits such as extreme jealousy and possessiveness can contribute to abusive behavior. Abusers may perceive their partner's interactions with others as threats to their own dominance or control, leading to violent reactions. This often stems from deep-rooted insecurities and the fear of abandonment.

Jealousy is associated with controlling behaviours of an intimate partner, which includes monitoring one's whereabouts, limiting contact with friends or families, and restricting access to resources or employment, education or medical care (World Health Organization, 2012).

3. Childhood Exposure to Abuse

Individuals who have experienced abuse or witnessed it during childhood are at a higher risk of becoming abusers themselves. Research indicates that many perpetrators of domestic violence were once victims of abuse or grew up in environments where violence was common. This exposure can lead to the development of harmful beliefs that violence is an acceptable way to resolve conflict. Consequently, this often results in an intergenerational cycle of abuse, where

those who were abused as children may replicate these behaviors in their own relationships (Ferguson, 2023).

4. Traditional Society Beliefs

A well-established risk factor for domestic and intimate partner violence is the adherence to traditional gender roles. Studies have shown that sexist attitudes, particularly those that promote the idea that women should be submissive to men and that men have the right to control women, contribute to the prevalence of domestic violence, especially violence against women (Ferguson, 2023). This power imbalance can foster an environment where men feel entitled to control their partners, and women are expected to tolerate such control, sometimes even suffering abuse in silence. These societal norms justify male authority and diminish women's autonomy, often making it difficult for victims to seek help or leave abusive relationships (Pence & Paymar, 1993).

5. Poverty

Poverty often worsens the occurrence of domestic violence. Financial hardship and job-related stress can create tension within the home, increasing the likelihood of abusive behavior. Economic dependency also prevents many victims from leaving abusive relationships. When individuals lack financial stability or the means to care for themselves and their children, they are more likely to remain in unsafe environments. Research indicates that victims who have access to financial resources and stable housing are significantly more capable of leaving abusive partners. In contrast, those who depend on their abuser for survival find it difficult to break free from the cycle of violence (Niess-May, 2019).

6. Mental Illness

Mental health problems can contribute to domestic violence, particularly when such conditions are left untreated. Although mental illness itself does not automatically cause violent behavior, certain psychiatric disorders can increase the risk. Disorders such as substance use disorder, antisocial personality disorder (ASPD), borderline personality disorder (BPD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and intermittent explosive disorder (IED) have been linked to aggressive or impulsive behavior.

Howard et al. (2010) note that while most individuals with mental illness are not violent, some conditions may heighten the risk of aggression in intimate relationships. The World Health Organization (2021) also reported that about one in four people with severe mental disorders may exhibit violent tendencies, with intimate partners often becoming victims due to emotional proximity. These conditions can impair judgment, reduce empathy, and increase impulsivity, which may contribute to abusive dynamics within marriages or close partnerships.

2.5 Effects of Domestic Violence

1. Physical Effects

Domestic violence frequently results in visible injuries such as bruises, cuts, burns, fractures, and internal bleeding. In severe cases, victims may suffer long-term disabilities or chronic illnesses. Physical assault can also trigger lasting health complications, including cardiovascular problems, chronic pain, and digestive issues (World Health Organization, 2013).

Coker et al. (2000) observed that women who experience both physical and emotional abuse often develop persistent health conditions like arthritis and migraines. Similarly, Plichta (2004)

noted that victims commonly face fatigue, sleep problems, and reproductive health issues, particularly when sexual violence is involved. Aye et al. (2024) further found that in Nigeria, domestic violence has led to physical injuries that evolve into chronic illnesses and psychological distress. Overall, these findings reveal that physical violence extends beyond surface injuries and creates long-term health burdens that require medical and emotional support.

2. Psychological Effects

The psychological consequences of domestic violence are often as damaging as the physical ones. Victims may experience persistent fear, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, even after the abuse ends. Continuous exposure to violence can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health conditions. According to *Psychiatric Quarterly* (2021), individuals with PTSD resulting from intimate partner violence frequently experience flashbacks, nightmares, and severe emotional distress.

Simos and Berle (2023) found that frequent and emotionally intense nightmares among survivors were closely associated with severe PTSD symptoms. Additionally, repeated head injuries from physical abuse can lead to traumatic brain injury (TBI), resulting in memory loss, difficulty concentrating, and an increased risk of dementia (*The Guardian*, 2023). These psychological scars can take years to heal, often requiring long-term counseling and emotional rehabilitation.

3. Social Effects

Domestic violence can severely affect a victim's social life and relationships. Many survivors become isolated as abusers often restrict their contact with friends, family, or support systems. Even after leaving the relationship, the effects of isolation and financial dependence can continue,

making it difficult for survivors to rebuild their social and economic stability. Postmus (2015) observed that prolonged isolation and dependency can lead to reduced confidence, limited opportunities, and social withdrawal. This hinders victims from regaining independence or establishing healthy relationships after abuse.

4. Effects on Children

Children who witness domestic violence or experience it directly face serious developmental, emotional, and behavioral challenges. Exposure to violence increases the risk of delinquent behavior, substance abuse, and violent tendencies in later life. Widom (1992) found that individuals who experienced childhood abuse were more likely to face juvenile arrests and engage in violent crimes as adults.

Christianson (1992) also reported that such children often suffer from anxiety, depression, and PTSD. They may display guilt, aggression, or withdrawal, and in some cases, develop suicidal thoughts. Witnessing repeated violence can distort a child's understanding of relationships and normalize aggression as a means of control. Pynoos and Nader (1988) further highlighted that children exposed to sexual or physical violence often develop PTSD symptoms such as anger, fear, and irritability. Providing psychological support and counseling is therefore essential to prevent long-term emotional damage and behavioral problems (Rheal et al., 1996)

2.6 Possible Solutions to Domestic Violence

Domestic violence remains a critical social issue, a widespread problem, and a harsh reality in many societies. It manifests in various forms, including men hitting, beating, and sometimes even killing their wives, and in some cases, women abusing their husbands. The consequences

extend beyond individuals, affecting families and the entire community (World Health Organization 2021). Unfortunately, domestic violence has long been treated as a private matter, leading many victims to suffer in silence (Dobash & Dobash 1979). However, change is possible. Addressing domestic violence requires a collective effort through stronger laws, increased public awareness and support systems for victims. Meaningful change is possible when every member of society takes responsibility and plays their part.

1. Victim Support Services

Victims of domestic violence should be supported through counselling, legal aid, accessible shelter and healthcare services. These services are vital in helping the victims heal from the trauma they have experienced and rebuild their lives in a healthier and safer environment. They should be designed to support all individuals, regardless of age, sex, religion, race or ethnic group. Research by Goodman and Epstein (2008) emphasizes that when victims have access to comprehensive support systems, they are more likely to leave abusive relationships and experience long-term safety and stability.

Furthermore, collaboration between service providers such as law enforcement, health professionals, social workers, and community organizations can create a more effective and holistic response to domestic violence, ensuring no victim falls through the cracks.

2. Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment

Mental health and substance abuse treatment play a critical role in eradicating or reducing domestic violence. Since some cases of domestic violence are linked to untreated mental health conditions or substance abuse, expanding access to mental health services, including early

intervention and rehabilitation, is essential. Studies have shown that perpetrators of violence become abusive due to untreated mental illness or substance use disorder. According to Stuart (2005), integrated interventions that address both substance abuse and violent behavior in intimate partner relationships have shown positive outcomes in reducing recidivism and improving behavioral control.

3. Public Awareness and Education

Educational campaigns can challenge the cultural norms and stigmas that enable domestic violence. Teaching about healthy relationships, consent, conflict resolution, and emotional regulation in schools and communities helps prevent violence before it begins. When individuals are enlightened and educated on the effects and consequences of domestic violence, they are more likely to recognize harmful behaviors within themselves and make efforts to control violent tendencies. Public awareness and education play a crucial role in helping individuals understand that domestic violence is not acceptable and that there are healthier ways to manage conflict. A study by Ribeiro Cardoso et al. (2023) found that awareness campaigns against domestic violence significantly increased individuals' perceived efficacy, leading to adopted behaviors that support victims and promote non-violent relationships.

4. Stronger Legal Frameworks

Governments must enforce strict laws that criminalize all forms of domestic violence. This includes clearer definitions of abuse, prompt investigation, protection orders, and consistent sentencing for perpetrators. Courts and law enforcement agencies need proper training to handle such cases with sensitivity and urgency.

When the government begins to enforce strong laws against domestic violence, perpetrators will be deterred from being abusive, and victims will feel more empowered to speak out and seek help from authorities rather than enduring the abuse in silence. The effectiveness of domestic violence laws depends not only on their existence but also on how well law enforcement applies them. Proper training for police officers is crucial to ensure these laws protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable (Bankole and Urhere, 2021).

5. Empowerment of Survivors

Empowering victims through vocational training, financial support, and education enhances their independence and significantly reduces the likelihood of returning to abusive environments. When victims are equipped with the skills and resources to support themselves, they are less dependent on their abusers and more confident in building a life free from violence. Empowerment also shifts their focus toward personal growth and stability, leaving little room for thoughts of returning to toxic relationships. Economic independence is often a key factor in a victim's ability to leave and stay away from abuse. A recent initiative in Nigeria, supported by the Spotlight Initiative, provided livelihood training to over 10,000 survivors of abuse, helping them build financial independence and reducing their vulnerability to future violence (Spotlight Initiative, 2023).

2.7 Theoretical Framework

(Social Learning Theory)

Social Learning Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura (1986), explains how individuals acquire behaviors, attitudes, and skills through the observation of others. It combines behavioral and

cognitive approaches by emphasizing the importance of imitation and modeling. In the context of domestic violence, this theory suggests that individuals particularly adolescents may develop aggressive or violent behaviors by observing influential figures such as family members, peers, or media personalities. While Social Learning Theory does not account for all acts of domestic violence, it provides insights into how some individuals adopt violent behaviors through social learning.

The family, as the first and most influential environment, plays a critical role in shaping a young person's values and actions (Bandura, 1986; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986). When children are exposed to domestic violence or violent attitudes at home or in their surroundings, they may internalize these patterns as acceptable. Over time, this learned behavior can influence their future actions and relationships, reinforcing the cycle of violence (Farrington, 1996).

In many communities, particularly in Egor Local Government Area (L.G.A), the family remains the primary socializing agent. Children raised in violent households, where physical aggression or verbal abuse is normalized, often internalize these behaviors as acceptable responses to conflict (Bandura, 1986; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986). Over time, these learned patterns can manifest in their future intimate relationships, contributing to a cycle of violence (Farrington, 1996).

A stable and nurturing family often promotes healthy behavior, while a broken or dysfunctional family, especially in cases of single parenting or family instability due to poverty, migration, past domestic abuse or separation can contribute to behavioral issues. Adolescents raised in such environments may be more prone to risky behaviors, including violence, as they lack consistent emotional support and may model the dysfunctional patterns they witness at home (Widom,

1989). Furthermore, through repeated exposure, these behaviors are reinforced and may later emerge in their own intimate relationships. This supports Bandura's idea that an individual's aggressive and violent behavior is, in part, a result of observing and imitating models who display similar behavior.

Peer groups and media also serve as significant sources of influence. Adolescents often model their behavior after their friends and peers, especially in high-stress environments (Bandura, 1986; Akers, 1998). Additionally, the media, through portrayals of aggression or violence, can normalize such behaviors and provide young people with examples of how to act (Huesmann, 2007). This further emphasizes the role of external influences in the development of violent tendencies.

This theoretical framework highlights the interplay between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors in shaping adolescents' involvement in domestic violence. Understanding these dynamics helps inform strategies that promote nonviolent behavior and positive role modeling.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter tends to outline the method used in collecting resource data. It outlines the research approach, procedures, and design of the study. It includes an overview of the research design, a definition of the target population, the sampling techniques used to select participants, the rationale for determining the sample size, the procedures for data collection, and the methods employed for data analysis and interpretation.

3.1 Research Design

The research design adopted for the study is the exploratory survey research using quantitative research approach, focusing on data collection and analysis through structured questionnaires administered to a representative sample. Respondents will be selected using cluster and convenience sampling techniques within the study providing valuable insights that allows researchers to thoroughly investigate the background of a research problem.

An exploratory survey research design is a research method that aims to provide insights into a specific topic or issues of a specific population or phenomenon by collecting data on their opinions, attitudes and behaviors. This design is considered suitable for this study as it will help to collect data to examine domestic violence among married couples in Egor Local Government Area. Benin City, Edo State.

3.2 Population of the study

The population of the study comprises individuals residing in Egor Local Government Area (LGA), located within Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. Egor LGA is part of the larger metropolitan area of Benin City and is known for its high population density, making it a significant urban center. Egor has an estimated population of approximately 502,700 people, covering a land area of 92.99 km², resulting in a population density of about 5,406 persons per square kilometer.

The administrative headquarters of Egor LGA is located in Uselu, and the area includes several densely populated communities. The choice of Egor LGA as the study area is based on its urban nature and the reported prevalence of domestic violence within the region. These characteristics make it a suitable location for conducting research on domestic violence among married couples.

3.3 Sampling size

The sample size of the study consists of 100 participants, systematically selected from (4) streets in Egor Local Government Area, with 25 participants from each street: Osayemwenre street, Edo odion street, Uwa street and Nosayaba street.

3.4 Sampling Techniques

The study will employ cluster sampling, where participants will be categorized based on their streets. While convenient sampling will be used to facilitate the administration of questionnaires to available and willing respondents.

3.5 Instrument of data collection

The instrument use for the study will be a quantitative data collection method, using structured questionnaires with a mix of close and open ended question survey to gather data and information. The questionnaire will be divided into two distinct sections: the first section will solicits socio-demographic information from participants, while the second section will focus more on the study's core objectives, probing the prevalence, attitudes and impacts of violence among married couples residing in Egor Local Government Area, Benin City.

3.6 Method of data collection

Data for the study will be collected through a structured questionnaire and unstructured. The researcher will rely on responses from the questionnaires as the primary source of data. These instruments are specifically designed to gather and obtain information from respondents on domestic violence among married couples residing in Egor Local Government Area.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure the validity of the research instruments, the questionnaire will be reviewed by experts in the field to confirm that the items effectively address the research objectives. Their suggestions will help improve the clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the instruments.

The reliability of the instruments was ensured by maintaining consistency in the structure and wording of the questions. A small pre-test was conducted to confirm that the questions were understandable and could generate consistent responses.

3.8 Method of data analysis

The data collected from the field will be analyzed using simple percentage and frequency distribution table to present the findings. These methods will help summarize the characteristics of the data in a clear manner.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

This study followed ethical guidelines to make sure all participants were treated with respect and care. Everyone who took part did so voluntarily, and their consent was obtained before giving them the questionnaire or interviewing them. They were informed about the purpose of the research, that they could stop at any time, and that their responses would be kept private.

Because domestic violence is a sensitive topic, extra care was taken not to upset or pressure anyone. No names or personal details were collected, and the information gathered will only be used for academic purposes. The researcher remained respectful and supportive during the data collection process.

3.10 Limitations of the Study

There were a few challenges during this study. First, because cluster and convenient sampling were used, the findings might not represent the views of everyone in the population. Some participants may also have felt uncomfortable sharing their experiences honestly, which could affect the accuracy of the results.

The study was also limited by time and resources, which reduced the number of people that could be included. In some cases, language differences and low literacy made it harder for some

respondents to fully understand the questions. Even with these challenges, the researcher tried to make the data as reliable and meaningful as possible.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter focuses on the organization, presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data collected from the field. A total of 100 questionnaires were administered to married couples residing in Egor Local Government Area, of which 99 were returned. Analyses are based on the valid responses for each question, with missing or invalid responses excluded from calculations. The questionnaires were designed to examine the causes and effects of domestic violence in Egor Local Government Area, Benin City.

4.1 SECTION A: SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

This has to do with the information relating to the personal characteristic of individual respondents as answered on section 1 of the questionnaires.

Clearance of this analysis is further presented in tables to show such characteristics;

TABLE 1: Sex Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	33	33.7
Female	64	65.3
No response	2	2.0
Total	99	100

From Table 1, the results show that female respondents were more than male, accounting for 65.3%, while male accounted for 33.7%. A small proportion (2.0%) did not indicate their sex.

TABLE 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age (Years)	Frequency	Percentage
20–24	29	29.3
25–29	22	22.2
30–34	25	25.3
35–39	7	7.1
40 & above	16	16.2
Total	99	100

Table 2 shows that the largest proportion of respondents were between 20–24 years (29.3%), followed by those aged 30–34 years (25.3%), while the least representation came from the 35–39 years group (7.1%).

TABLE 3: Religion of Respondents

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	60	60.6
Islam	34	34.3
Others	5	5.1
Total	99	100

Table 3 shows that the majority of respondents (60.6%) were Christians, while 34.3% were Muslims, and 5.1% belonged to other religions.

TABLE 4: Occupation of Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Student	29	29.3
Civil Servant	9	9.1
Employed	22	22.2
Self-employed	27	27.3
Unemployed	5	5.1
Retired	7	7.1
Total	99	100

From Table 4, it is observed that the highest number of respondents were students (29.3%) and the self-employed (27.3%), while the unemployed group had the least representation (5.1%).

TABLE 5: Length of Marriage of Respondents

Length of Marriage	Frequency	Percentage
0–5 years	50	50.5
6–10 years	25	25.3
11–15 years	13	13.1
Over 15 years	9	9.1
No response	2	2.0
Total	99	100

Table 5 shows that most of the respondents (50.5%) had been married for 0–5 years, while only 9.1% had been married for over 15 years.

TABLE 6: Number of Children of Respondents

Number of Children	Frequency	Percentage
None	14	14.1
1–2	34	34.3
3–4	35	35.4
5–6	13	13.1
6 or more	3	3.0
Total	99	100

Table 6 shows that the largest proportion of respondents had 3–4 children (35.4%), followed closely by those with 1–2 children (34.3%), while only 3.0% had 6 or more children.

4.2 SECTION B: PUBLIC PERCEPTION ON THE CAUSES, FORMS AND EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG MARRIED COUPLES IN EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

The table below shows respondents perceptions on the causes, forms and effects of domestic violence among married couples.

TABLE 7: Respondents Awareness on Domestic Violence

Question	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
Have you heard of the word domestic violence	Yes	89	89.9
	No	3	3.0
	No response	7	7.1
	Total	99	100

Analyzing the table 7, the first question shows that a very great percentage of the total number of respondents (89.9%) ticked Yes, meaning that the majority of the respondents have heard of the word Domestic Violence, while only 3% ticked No, which means only a few respondents are not familiar with the word. In addition, 7.1% of the respondents gave no response.

Table 8: Respondents Understanding of Domestic Violence

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
What do you understand by the word domestic Violence	Physical abuse	63	68.5
	Verbal/Emotional abuse	61	66.3
	Sexual abuse	10	10.9
	Economic/Financial abuse	7	7.6
	Neglect/Abandonment	1	1.1
Total		92	100

From Table 8 above, it is indicated that a very great percentage of the total number of valid respondents (68.5%) understood Domestic Violence to mean physical abuse, while 66.3% believed it refers to verbal or emotional abuse. In addition, 10.9% understood it as sexual abuse, 7.6% as economic or financial abuse, and 1.1% as neglect or abandonment. However, 5 respondents gave no response and 2 questionnaires were invalid, leaving 92 valid responses for analysis. The total number of responses exceeded 99 because some respondents provided definitions that reflected more than one category.

Research Objective one

Table 9: To find out if domestic violence is common among couples in Egor L.G.A of Edo state.

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Does domestic violence occur among married couples	Yes	81	81.8
	No	16	16.2
	No response	2	2
	Total	99	100
How often does it occur	Very Often	21	21.2
	Often	24	24.2
	Sometimes	54	54.6
	Total	99	100
Have you ever Experienced domestic Violence in your home	Yes	50	50.5
	No	49	49.5
	Total	99	100
Has any couple you know experienced domestic Violence	Yes	86	86.9
	No	13	13.1
	Total	99	100

From Table 9 above, the result shows that the majority (81.8%) confirmed that domestic violence occurs among married couples, while 16.2% disagreed and 2.0% gave no response. Among those who agreed, 54.5% reported it occurs sometimes, 24.2% often, and 21.2% very often. Furthermore, 50.5% of respondents reported having personally experienced domestic violence,

while 49.5% said they had not, indicating an almost even split in personal experience. Lastly, 86.9% reported knowing a couple who has experienced domestic violence, while 13.1% said no, showing high community awareness of the issue.

Research Objective Two

Table 10 : To identify the causes of domestic violence experienced among married couples

Question	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
What are the causes of domestic violence	Poverty/unemployment	44	44.4
	Infidelity	19	19.19
	Drug/alcohol abuse	9	9.09
	Poor communication	20	20.20
	Cultural/religious beliefs	7	7.07
	Others	0	0.00
	Total	99	100
What are the most common forms of domestic violence In your area	Physical abuse	59	59.6
	Verbal/emotional abuse	39	39.4
	Sexual abuse	32	32.3
	Economic/financial abuse	46	46.5
	Neglect or abandonment	31	31.3
	Total	207	100

From Table 10, the study identifies that poverty (44.44%) is the major cause of domestic violence, followed by poor communication (20.20%) and infidelity (19.19%). Drug/alcohol

abuse (9.09%) and cultural or religious factors (7.07%) were less reported. For the forms of domestic violence, physical (59) was most common, followed by economic (46) and emotional (39), while sexual (32) and neglect (31) were less frequent. The total for the forms exceeded 99 because respondents could select more than one option.

Research Objective 3

TABLE 11 : To examine the effects of domestic violence among married couples in Egor L.G.A of Edo state.

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage%
What are the major effects of domestic violence among married couples	Lack of trust between partners	45	45.5
	Emotional trauma or depression	49	49.5
	Separation or Divorce	50	50.5
	Poor communication	38	38.4
	Fear and Insecurity	33	33.3
	Others	1	1.0
	Total	216	100
Do you think domestic violence affects children in the home	Yes	90	90.9
	No	9	9.1
	Total	99	100

From Table 11, the findings shows that emotional trauma or depression (50.5%), fear or insecurity (49.5%), and lack of trust between partners (45.5%) are the major effects of domestic

violence. Other effects include separation or divorce (38.4%), poor communication (33.3%), and others (1%). Moreover, 90.9% of respondents agreed that domestic violence affects children, while only 9.1% disagreed, indicating its severe emotional and psychological impact on families.

Research Objective 4

TABLE 12a : To determine possible solutions to domestic violence among married couples

Question	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
What can be done to reduce or prevent domestic violence among married couples	Family & Counseling Support	48	48.5
	Education/awareness	19	19.2
	Legal & Government Actions	15	15.2
	Economic & Community Support	8	8.1
	No response	9	9.1
	Total	99	100

From table 12a above, the study found that family-based solutions (30.3%) and education or awareness (19.2%) were the most common strategies to reduce domestic violence. Legal and government actions (15.2%) were also identified as important, while economic and community support (8.1%) and those who gave no response (9.1%) were less emphasized. Overall, the

findings highlight the need for both family-centered and institutional efforts to effectively prevent and address domestic violence.

TABLE 12b

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Who should play the biggest role in addressing domestic violence	Religious leaders	12	12.1
	Government/law	25	25.3
	Families/communities	20	20.2
	NGOs	7	7.1
	All of the above.	35	35.4
	Total	99	100

As shown in table 12b above, Findings shows that 35.4% of respondents believe all stakeholders, government, religious leaders, NGOs, and families should collectively play the biggest role in addressing domestic violence. Government and law enforcement (25.3%) and families or communities (20.2%) were also viewed as important actors.

TABLE 12c

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Should victims seek external help or keep it within the family	External help	41	41.4
	Within family	18	18.2
	Depends	40	40.4
	Total	99	100

Lastly, Table 12c reveals that 41.4% of respondents believe victims should seek external help, while 40.4% said it depends, showing mixed opinions on how domestic issues should be handled.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study was carried out to examine domestic violence among married couples in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to find out if domestic violence is common among couples, to identify its causes, to examine its effects, and to determine possible solutions to reduce it in the study area.

The data for the study were gathered from a primary source through the administration of 100 questionnaires, of which 99 were retrieved and used for the analysis. Respondents were systematically selected from four (4) streets within Egor L.G.A: Osayemwenre Street, Edo Odion Street, Uwa Street, and Nosayaba Street.

The findings from the analysis revealed among other things that:

1. Findings showed that the majority of respondents (89.9%) had heard of the word domestic violence, indicating a high level of awareness among married individuals in Egor L.G.A.
2. Most respondents understood domestic violence to mean physical and emotional abuse, while others identified it as sexual, financial, or neglect-related abuse, showing that people recognize it as a multifaceted problem.
3. The result further revealed that domestic violence is common among married couples in the area, with 81.8% confirming its occurrence and 54.5% stating that it happens sometimes.

4. Findings showed that 50.5% of respondents had personally experienced domestic violence, while 86.9% said they know a couple who has, indicating that the issue is widespread in the community.

5. The study also identified that poverty (44.4%), poor communication (20.2%), and infidelity (19.2%) are the leading causes of domestic violence among couples in Egor L.G.A. Other contributing factors included drug or alcohol abuse and cultural or religious beliefs.

6. In terms of forms of domestic violence, physical abuse was the most reported, followed by economic and emotional abuse, while sexual and neglect-related abuse were less frequent.

7. Findings further revealed that domestic violence has several negative effects, including emotional trauma, marital instability, physical injury, and reduced family harmony.

8. Lastly, the study found that family-based solutions (30.3%) and education or awareness (19.2%) were the most common strategies suggested to reduce domestic violence. Furthermore, 35.4% of respondents believed that all stakeholders, government, religious leaders, NGOs, and families should collectively play a role in addressing the problem.

5.2 Conclusion

This study was carried out with the purpose of investigating domestic violence among married couples in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. The findings revealed that domestic violence remains a serious social problem that affects many families in the area.

The study concluded that domestic violence is common and is caused mainly by poverty, poor communication, infidelity, and substance abuse. Its effects are far-reaching leading to emotional distress, marital breakdown, and social instability.

Furthermore, It was also concluded that domestic violence is not just a private family matter but a community issue that requires collective efforts from the government, families, religious institutions, and non-governmental organizations to tackle effectively.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made to help reduce domestic violence among married couples in Egor L.G.A:

1. Awareness and Education: Government and NGOs should organize enlightenment campaigns and educational programs to educate couples and community members about the dangers of domestic violence.
2. Counseling and Family Support Services: There should be free and accessible counseling centers where victims and couples experiencing conflict can seek professional help.
3. Economic Empowerment: Efforts should be made to empower families economically, as poverty and unemployment were found to be major causes of domestic violence.
4. Community Involvement: Religious and community leaders should play active roles in promoting peaceful coexistence and discouraging harmful cultural practices that justify violence.

5. Stricter Legal Enforcement: Government should strengthen and enforce laws that will protect victims of domestic violence and ensure offenders are punished to prevent future occurrences.

6. Pre-Marital and Marriage Counseling: Couples should be encouraged to attend counseling sessions before and during marriage to improve communication and understanding between them.

7. Collaboration Among Stakeholders: All relevant bodies including families, NGOs, religious leaders, and law enforcement agencies should work together to promote peace and family stability.

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APPENDIX
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Dear Respondents,

This questionnaire is designed to examine the perception of married couples regarding domestic violence in Egor Local Government Area of Benin City. The researcher kindly requests your assistance as a respondent in this study.

Your participation is voluntary and all responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and anonymity.

Instructions: Please fill in the relevant information in the space provided and tick [] where appropriate.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. Sex: (a) Male [] (b) Female []
2. Age: (a) 20–24 [] (b) 25–29 [] (c) 30–34 [] (d) 35–39 [] (e) 40 and above []
3. Religious Affiliation: (a) Christianity [] (b) Islam [] (c) Others []
4. Occupation: (a) Student [] (b) Civil servant [] (c) Employed [] (d) Self-employed []
(e) Unemployed [] (f) Retired []
5. Length of Marriage: (a) 0–5 years [] (b) 6–10 years [] (c) 11–15 years [] (d) Over 15 years []
6. Number of Children : (a) 0 [] (b) 1-2 [] (c) 3–4 [] (d) 5–6 [] (e) 6 or more []

SECTION B: RESEARCH DATA

7. Have you heard of the word Violence? Yes [] No []
8. Have you heard of the word Domestic Violence? Yes [] No []
9. If 'Yes' to question 8, what do you understand by the word Domestic Violence?

10. Does domestic violence occur among married couples residing in Egor Local Government Area?

Yes [] No []

11. If Yes, how often does it occur?

(a) Very often [] (b) Often [] (c) Sometimes []

12. What forms of domestic violence are most common in your area? (You may tick more than one)

(a) Physical abuse []

(b) Verbal/emotional abuse []

(c) Sexual abuse []

(d) Economic/financial abuse []

(e) Neglect or abandonment []

13. In your opinion, what are the major causes of domestic violence among married couples?

(a) Poverty/unemployment []

(b) Infidelity []

(c) Drug/alcohol abuse []

(d) Poor communication []

(e) Cultural or religious beliefs []

(f) Other (please specify): _____

14. Who do you think suffers more from domestic violence in marriage?

(a) Husband []

(b) Wife []

(c) Both equally []

15. Have you ever experienced domestic violence in your home?

(a) Yes []

(b) No []

16. If yes, what type of domestic violence did you experience? (You may tick more than one)

(a) Physical abuse []

(b) Verbal/emotional abuse []

(c) Sexual abuse []

(d) Economic/financial abuse []

(e) Other (please specify): _____

17. Has any couple you know experienced domestic violence? Yes [] No []

18. What are the effects of domestic violence on married couples? (You may tick more than one)

(a) Lack of trust between partners []

(b) Emotional trauma or depression []

(c) Separation or divorce []

(d) Poor communication []

(e) Fear and insecurity []

(f) Other (please specify): _____

19. Do you think domestic violence affects children in the home?

Yes [] No []

20. If yes, how does it affect children?

21. What do you think can be done to reduce or prevent domestic violence among married couples?

SECTION C: SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

22. In your opinion, what can be done to help reduce domestic violence among married couples?

23. Who do you think should play the biggest role in addressing domestic violence?

- (a) Religious leaders []
- (b) Government/law enforcement []
- (c) Families and communities []
- (d) Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) []
- (e) All of the above []

24. Should victims of domestic violence seek external help or keep it within the family?

- (a) Seek external help (police, NGOs, etc.) []
- (b) Keep it within the family []
- (c) Depends on the situation []

25. Do you think counseling can help prevent or reduce domestic violence?

- (a) Yes []
- (b) No []
- (c) Not sure []