

Enduring Intimate Partner Violence in Marriage: Myths and realities

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ABSTRACT: *This paper investigates IPV experiences of women in Nigeria, and the reasons women hold to justify enduring IPV in marriage. The objectives of the study include assessing the role of the state, culture and religion in intimate partner violence, and evaluating the relationship between societal level biases and enduring IPV in marriage. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design involving 400 respondents selected from different states in Nigeria using non-probability sampling. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used for data collection. Data were evaluated using univariate and bivariate analysis. At the univariate level, descriptive statistics were used to analyse variables like the socio-demographic information of the respondents while chi-square was employed to test hypothesis. Findings show that, at p-value of .0256 ($p < .05$), societal level biases and cultural and religious ideals about marriage are positively linked to women's acceptance and endurance of IPV. The study also revealed that women elect to endure IPV in marriage owing to the stigma attached to failed marriages; lack of finance and responsibility to children, inter alia. Furthermore, 70.5% of the respondents indicated that it is expected of a woman to endure IPV in marriage as it is contrary to cultural and religious injunctions to leave a marriage, even if it is abusive. The study thus recommends the need to develop a protective environment for women against societal, cultural and religious ideals. Vulnerable women should be able to access unrestricted legal support when opting out of an abusive marital relationship. Most importantly, beliefs that compel women to endure IPV in marriage should be abolished.*

KEYWORDS: intimate partner violence, marital instability, women in society, marriage, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Intimate Partner Violence is an area of public, social and academic concern that has been on the rise globally, particularly between couples. Broad corpus of sociological, feminist literature and public discourse have drawn attention to the pervasiveness and prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) globally as one of the most common forms of violence suffered by women (UN Women, 2015). Issues associated with IPV include partner assault, wife battering, coercive control, intimidation, humiliation, sleep deprivation, rape, forced drug or alcohol use, forced abortion, acid throwing, and other dangerous levels of intimate terrorism. Individuals who experience IPV may have temporary or lifelong physical and mental injuries, alongside other incapacitating socio-economic consequences. Specifically, victims of IPV may experience anxiety disorders; feelings of fear, guilt, and shame; reduced self-esteem; depressive symptoms; physical deformations; and posttraumatic stress disorder (Bjørnholt & Hjemdal, 2018; Hamby, 2017; Breiding, Chen & Black, 2014). According to Akaba and Abdullahi (2020), Onoh, *et al*, (2013) and Campbell (2002), injurious physical and mental health sequelae of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) include chronic pain, gynaecological problems, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), physical injury or death.

Intimate partner violence is a serious public health concern and a global social problem that has complex implications for victims and their loved ones as well as for the community, the healthcare system, and social and judicial services. Unfortunately, this phenomenon is gradually becoming highly prevalent in low and middle-income countries (Sardinha, *et al*, 2022; John, Adebayo, & Boychuk, *et al*, 2022) especially in developing countries where laws protecting people from abuse and violence are largely weak (UN Women, 2015). While both men and women can be victim to IPV, the same way both men and women can be perpetrators, prevalence rates of violence against women are higher worldwide and men are the main culprits of both violence against men and women (WHO, 2013; Nigerian Demographic Health Survey (NDHS), 2013). Globally, an estimated 736 million women, that is almost one in three women, have been subjected to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence. In 2020 alone, 81,000 women and girls were reportedly killed globally, and 47,000 of them died at the hands of an intimate partner of a family member (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), (2021). Furthermore, in comparison to males, females are more likely to be violated, injured, or killed by violence, regardless of their ethnicity, race, or socio-economic status (Karakurt, Smith & Whiting, 2014; Johnson, 2008).

In Nigeria, different studies such as the Nigerian Demographic Health Survey (2013), have noted that intimate partner violence is high and about one in four women in Nigeria report having experienced intimate partner violence (Benebo, Schumann & Vaezghasemi, 2018). Substantial body of research have investigated IPV causes, risk factors and the different forms of IPV experienced by women (Ajayi, Chantler & Radford, 2022; Shinwari, Wilson, Abiodun & AliShaikh, 2021; Benebo, *et al*, 2018; Solanke, 2018; Onigbogi, Odeyemi & Onigbogi, 2015).

Most of these studies adopted a cross-sectional or sectoral analysis method and the ecological model to explain why women remain in abusive relationships (Benebo, *et al*, 2018; Onigbogi, *et al*, 2015.) Normative expectations connected to the approval of violence have been identified as a predictor of IPV in Nigeria (Linos, *et al*, 2013; Uthman, *et al*, 2011). Common factors associated with intimate partner violence include low self-esteem, poor parental upbringing, aggressive behaviour, substance abuse, early life experiences of abuse, and economic difficulties (Akaba & Abdullahi, 2020; Abramsky, *et al*, 2011; Campbell, 2002).

Beyond individual-level factors, social factors such as culture and religion also play a substantial role in encouraging IPV. For instance, norms that accept that men have the right to correct or discipline their wives and manage their behavior, will find people justifying intimate partner violence. As opined by Benebo, *et al* (2018), living in areas where male approval of wife-beating is higher boosted the favorable relationship between monetary work and IPV. Onoh, *et al* (2013) also noted that partner violence is higher in societies where men are expected to be main source of income for the household. The existential fact of marriage in relation to the popularly held false beliefs/biases, expectations and traditions embodying the ideals of marriage that predispose women to endure IPV in marriage are under studied in literature. Although many studies have investigated the phenomenon of IPV in different contexts and relationships (Dim, 2018), there is need to address these theoretical and methodological gaps in the literature by interrogating the myths and realities surrounding intimate partner violence in Nigeria. It is thus the aim of this study to empirically investigate the IPV experiences of women in marriage, and interrogate the reasons women hold to justify enduring intimate partner violence in Nigeria. The study, as part of its objectives, will also examine the role of the state, culture and religion in intimate partner violence. We hypothesize that societal level biases/false beliefs and expectations on cultural and religious ideals about marriage are positively linked to women's tolerance and endurance of IPV in marriage.

Intimate Partner Violence and the State

The resurgence and explosion of research and discourse problematizing violence in intimate relationships has gained more visibility within the past four decades (Dobash & Dobash, 2015; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). The term intimate partner violence had been used interchangeably with domestic violence to explain “psychological or physical” impacts of perpetrates covert and overt actions towards the vulnerable members in a relationship. Domestic violence is used in many contexts as a generic term for all kinds of violence against members of a household which may likely involve children and the aged. It may be men's violence against women, women's violence against men, delinquent violence, adult violence against the aged or adult violence against the child. IPV on its part, takes place among married heterosexual partners, same-sex partners, dating and co-habiting relationships. IPV denotes any “behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship” (WHO, 2012). The bond between a husband and wife is supposedly built on love but the presence of violence among

these intimate partners portrays this bond as a trap. IPV is an indictment of social institutions of the society and the norms that mandate violence in marriage (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001).

IPV is a “pattern of behaviour in any relationship that is used to gain, or maintain, power and control over an intimate partner” (UN, 2022). We therefore, frame IPV as any compelling abusive behaviour in a heterosexual marriage that terrorizes and produces sexual, psychological, financially-induced, technological/digitally enhanced, physical violence, injury or death on the victim. Some studies have approached the issue of IPV from a health and human rights perspective (Akaba & Abdulahi, 2020; Coll, Ewerling, Garcia-Moreno, & Hellwig, *et al*, 2020), but we follow the line of sociological and feminist research that view it from a holistic lens as a social problem suffered especially by women. Similarly, various literature on IPV consistently indicate a higher frequency, occurrence and prevalence of men’s violence against women in intimate relationships (Ajayi, *et al*, 2022; WHO, 2019; Benebo, *et al*, 2018; UN, 2018; Dobash & Dobash, 2015).

Early literature on IPV in marriage traced its origins to certain conventional cultural and legal norms that validate male power and control over the woman such as the ancient English law that once allowed husbands to physically punish their wives through “moderate” beatings. Aside the social norms that guide marriage, the penal code in the northern Nigeria is similar to the alleged ancient English law. Section 55 of the penal code stipulates that “nothing is an offence which does not amount to infliction of grievous hurt upon any person which is done... by a husband for the purpose of correcting his wife, such husband and wife being subject to any native law and custom under which such correction is lawful” (Laws of Northern Nigeria Cap 89). The Nigerian Criminal code was derived from the British common law which had earlier approved the use of forceful sex by a husband on the wife (Hale, 1 PC 629 cited in the Law Commission). According to this law which was eventually abolished in the 1970’s, the contract of marriage implies that the wife had given an irrevocable consent for sex to her husband and as property of her husband of which he could do as he wish. By this law, the ownership of a wife by the husband by virtue of marriage and the application of violence as a tool to keep her under control are normalised. Through this, IPV and more harmful practices have become deeply ingrained in the social fabric of the Nigerian society.

Furthermore, while Nigeria has ratified the agreements of many international treaties, charters and interventions on violence against women such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Platform for Action, Maputo Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, successive Nigerian governments since the return of elected civilian administration in 1999 did not show the political will to domesticate these agreements or to make laws that protect women from IPV or domestic violence until 2015. The Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP 2015) seeks to criminalize such violations as rape, female circumcision or genital mutilation, spousal battery, forceful ejection from home, force financial dependence or economic abuse, harmful widowhood practices, abandonment of children,

harmful traditional practices. Others are harmful substance attack such as acid baths, political violence, forced isolation and separation from family and friends, depriving persons of their liberty, incest, indecent exposure and violence by state actors (especially government security forces); but does not protect women from other forms gender-based violence. Currently there are no adequate legal provisions for the protection of victims of IPV who are largely women. Premised on these, Abraham and Tastsoglou (2016) argue that the state appears to play both a dual and contradictory role as the representative or custodian of justice/defender of the oppressed and also an instrument of male dominance and oppression. For instance, legislations on the rights of women and men portray structural/institutional gender inequalities. Sections 353 and 360 of the Criminal Code of the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1990) view assault on a man as constituting a serious crime(felony), whereas the same offence committed against a woman is deemed a minor crime (misdemeanour).

IPV against women and men are both under reported in Nigeria for obvious reasons. The Domestic Violence in Nigeria report (2016) revealed that 97.2% of women do not report the crime to the Nigeria Police because their reports are trivialized as private matter that cannot be handled by law enforcement agencies. Women do not seek redress for IPV and in some cases die in silence due to complacency, social and institutional tolerance of violence against women and the inability of the law to protect them. In simpler terms, the gendered nature of institutions, gender socialization, stereotypes and prejudices predispose women to vulnerabilities (Nwakanma & Erundu, 2021).

Theoretical framework: Social Norm Approach and Intersectionality

This study adopts the Social Norm approach and Feminist Intersectionality frameworks to explain the myths and realities of marriage that predispose women to endure IPV. Many studies reviewed explored diverse social norms that may contribute to women's risk of IPV victimisation (Clark & Yount, 2018; Linos *et al*, 2013; Dobash & Dobash, 1979, etc). Sociologists are interested in the 'social functions' of social norms and how they predispose people to behave in certain ways. Bicchieri (2016) examines social norms as "behaviours that depend on both empirical and normative expectation. Empirical expectation: Women endure IPV in marriage because they expect others to do the same. Normative expectation: Women endure IPV in marriage because they assume that others expect them to do so. Social norms are practices that are supported by certain popular underlying assumptions, practices and expectations. The focus of this study is on the age-long social beliefs, practices and expectations in marriage that drive women to endure intimate partner violence. Social norm: Enduring IPV in marriage is driven by the belief that many others believe that other women should endure IPV in marriage. Descriptive norm: Enduring IPV in marriage is inspired by the belief that many other women endure IPV in marriage.

Marriage is a collective practice that involves two or more individuals and their respective family, kin group and community, reinforced by certain societal beliefs, practices and expectations. We examine marriage from a social norm perspective that indicates socio-cultural (community and faith) acceptance/approval of bride price payment as symbolising change of ownership, male

dominance, female submissiveness and subordination, exclusion of women from decision making, unequal power relations, man as provider and woman as homemaker, marriage as indissoluble, etc. More so, the consequences of not adhering to these beliefs and expectations (such as stigma, excommunication, alienation, loss of status) exert strong influence on the choices people make either to leave or remain in marriage and endure violence.

Feminist theory in sociology explains IPV as a function of unequal power relations embedded in the social structures of society that perpetrate male dominance and female subjugation. Intersectionality is germane to understanding the multiple intersecting dimensions of oppression that women experience in marriage. Intersectionality theory argues that women are differentially oppressed by the varied intersections of systems of inequality (Collins, 1999; Crenshaw, 1991). Women in Nigeria are oppressed in marriage on the basis of gender with intersections of other “vectors of oppression and privilege” like faith, exclusion from decision-making, power (violence), rurality. The privilege enjoyed by men as heads of household/unequal power relations turn on the oppression of women. Systems of social inequality built on hierarchical structures of unjust power relations produce platforms against which men evaluate women and themselves as husband, man, head and wife, mother, woman, divorcee and Christian. Man, as husband, owns the wife therefore has the right to dominate in marriage. IPV in marriage serves to maintain inequality in positions of subordination since violence is a form of social inequality (Hearn, 2013).

Power Dynamics in Marriage

Marriage is a constantly evolving and dynamic issue that has been redefined to suit current global, and changing divergent interests. The perception of marriage as a union between a man and a woman has changed since the 1980’s with the legalization of same-sex marriages in many parts of the world. Due to its diverse cultural contexts, marriage is described as a group’s endorsed mating plans mostly involving rituals that portray the couple’s new status (Henslin, 2008). The traditional institution of marriage is one that conferred status instituted usually in a formal ceremony in which the intimate partners agree to abide by the rules, norms and expected behaviour of spouse and parent in their relationship (Scott, 2000). The institution of marriage occupies a privileged and elevated status and was traditionally conceived as a ‘lifelong obligation’. It was meant to be a life-term or lifelong commitment between a man and a woman. Marriage is universal and exists in all human societies with elaborate laws and rites of passage associated with it. There is a trend shift in the form of marriage from polygyny to monogamy except among Muslims where a man is required to marry up to four wives.

Marriage in most Nigerian cultures exist in patrilocal settings. Culturally, the man initiates the process of marriage which makes the woman’s role passive in the relationship. Nigeria operates a dual system of marriage which could be Islam/customary or customary/statutory marriage. The customary marriage system takes place in accordance with the native law and customs of the people. While the statutory marriage, solemnized formerly under the marriage ordinance now the Marriage Act system, is celebrated in registry or any place of worship. In contemporary Nigerian

society, a double decker type of marriage trends whereby a man marries the same woman under customary law and Islamic or statutorily. A man marries a woman through the payment of a symbolic sum of money known as the bride price as a desideratum for marriage according to native law and custom in addition to other financial and material commitments. This is characterized by the exchange of gifts between the families of the bridegroom and bride. Marriage in Nigeria is a dual system contracted in Islamic law (Mithaqun Ghalithun, Quran 4:21) and native law and custom as found in most Northern states. On the other hand, Christian ordinance of holy matrimony (Marriage Act) and traditional marriage according to the customary marriage system are the systems of legal contract between a man and woman prevalent in the southern part of the country. We conceptualise marriage as a heterosexual relationship between a man and one or more women formalized through marital rites of passage in an unequal power relation. The emphasis on heterosexual marriages is cogent because Nigeria prohibits all forms of same-sex intimate relationships. Basically, in many African culture, marriage is a revered institution due to its close relations to the family and kinship. The relationship is usually contracted between two or more families and kin-groups. Marriage developed from a patriarchal origin and exists in different forms, cultures and contexts providing different lived marital experiences to each member of the social unit. It is a gendered institution with unequal power relations where women and men usually experience different rights, roles and responsibilities (Bernard, 1972) and generally, the couple share intimate feelings. Gender roles and expectations are socially constructed and directly impinge on couple's power relations (Nwakanma & Erundu, 2021; Williams & McBain, 2006). The responsibilities of being a man and a woman is formed by gender roles. Men have culturally legitimated right to women's subordination through structurally and culturally defined role limited to the domestic sphere. Gender roles and expectations play a significant role in the power dynamics in marriage and the resultant spousal relationship. Ajayi, *et al* (2021) analysed how bride price payment, gender roles and expectations shape and determine power dynamics in heterosexual marriages. The patriarchal nature of marriages in Nigerian cultures legitimates and justifies husbands' control of their spouses and family decisions. Traditional gender roles in patriarchal marriages implies an unequal power arrangement favourable to men (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010) and dependence on the man as the breadwinner by the woman (home maker) as typified by Parsons (1964). Cheung and Chiu (2021) and Treas and Kim, (2016) noted the existence of power in marriage in different forms and sources such as physical, economic and relationship power with domestic work arrangement and decision-making roles as indices for the latter's measurement. Factually, while women in contemporary Nigerian marriages are less likely to share power equally with their husbands because of traditional, cultural expectations, patriarchy and unequal resources, men do have a stronger power motive to dominate women for these same reasons. IPV is rooted in the structure of marriage (Navarro-mantas, *et al*, 2022), being hierarchically organized in accordance with patriarchal principles. IPV in marriage against women is both an expression of men's power and the resolve to acquire and assert more power and dominance over women (Websdale, 2010; Dobash and Dobash, 1979). The foregoing discussions provide useful insights into the connection between patriarchy, marital power and violence. The customary law places women in a subordinate status of 'marital inferiority' hence they are treated like a chattel. Under

the customary law, wives are considered as part of a man's properties that could be inherited (Aniagolu, 1975). Based on perceived norms, wives are expected to be submissive, respectful and dutiful to their husbands. Cultural norms, gender roles and expectations are globally shifting to the sharing of household tasks and caregiving by husbands and wives as more women join the labour force. In addition to the basis of identity as wives and mothers, (home-making and nurturance roles) women are increasingly acquiring more roles outside the home but the equivalence in shared domestic duties have remained untenable (Eagly, *et al*, 2020). Irrespective of Nigerian women's progress in developing their capacities their lives have remained shrouded in inequity (UNDP, 2005). Culture is dynamic but the structures and institutions that subjugate women and support male dominance have become resistant to change.

Myths and realities about Marriage and IPV

The reasons why women endure violence in marriage, instead of leaving or seeking care, has been at the heart of sociological research. Many studies have indicated sociodemographic dimensions to perpetration and victimization in IPV under individual-level, relationship-level, community-level and societal-level factors (Shinwari, *et al*, 2022; Benebo, *et al*, 2018; Solanke, 2018; Akaba & Abdullahi, 2020; WHO, 2012; Abramsky, *et al*, 2011). These are the existential facts about marriage in relation to ingrained cultural practices, tradition, popularly held stereotypical but false beliefs and expectations embodying the ideals of marriage in ethnic and religious communities that push women to endure IPV in marriage. Some studies on antecedents of IPV suggest that women are vulnerable to IPV and do not leave abusive relationships due to mitigating circumstances beyond their control ranging from interest and concern for children and partner, poor or no support services, discrimination/stigma, financial status, gender norms etc (Navarro-Mantas, *et al* 2022; Sardinha *et al*, 2022; Uthman *et al*, 2011; Linos *et al*, 2013).

Cultural expectations are rife for people to marry young particularly, girls because of the false belief that a woman is incomplete without a husband. Consequently, society disapproves of delayed marriage from a cultural standpoint of aging that governs the age at which one can marry. This "double standard" defines her sexual value as well as measures her worth and status in society (Bell, 1983). However, the biblical account of creation in Genesis 2: 18 rather states that "*and the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*" This fact implies that contrary to the cultural bias that a woman is incomplete without a husband, rather, the man is incomplete without the woman. Studies have also shown that men enjoy greater health benefits in marriage than women. (Eitzen & Zinn 2001; Bernard, 1972). As a subordinate, the woman is taught to expect less and be satisfied with less in marriage.

Ingrained cultural practices portray the double standard nature of marriage in Nigeria in which men have palpable advantage over the women (Nwakanma & Erondy, 2021; Rice, 1993). Men are perceived as being sexually aggressive and culturally expected to have multiple sexual partners whereas women are discouraged to express their sexual desire and charged of infidelity if involved in extra-marital relationship (Rice, 1993). The universal practice whereby women adopt their husbands' surname at marriage (Carter & Duncan, 2018), subsequently their children follow the patrilineal naming pattern which implies their ownership by the man (Pilcher, 2017). Cultural norms of marriage approve male authority over women and "a man's right" to enforce conformity through the infliction of violence on his intimate partner (WHO, 2019). Lelaurin, *et al* (2019) shares a similar view that IPV myth acceptance is linked to a set of belief systems that seek to maintain the social hierarchy between males and females in marriage. Intergenerational shifts are currently altering the normative roles of husbands as 'providers' and wives as homemakers. Women's entrance into paid labour is viewed as rebellion to traditional 'instrumental' and 'expressive' sex roles of husband and wife which may likely increase IPV perpetration by men and victimization of women (John, *et al*, 2022; Aizer, 2010; Macmillan & Gartner, 1999; Hornung, *et al*, 1981).

Marriage ideally, in most Nigerian cultures, is meant to be an indissoluble, lifelong obligation in which divorce is prohibited. As a result, family, community, religion and society at large puts pressure on the couple to ensure a lasting marriage relationship. These underscore the reasons why women endure violence in marriage since divorce is not normative and ending a marriage relationship is an unviable alternative for women. The customary marriage perspective allows the possibility of divorce though rarely occurs. Divorce proceedings according to native law and custom is not cumbersome depending on the locality but generally, entails the return of the woman to her parents, the return of the bride price and any other method applicable to the cultural group, which indicates that the woman has been fully returned.

Under the Marriage Act, divorce proceedings are very difficult and becoming common especially, the ones consummated in registry. Marriage celebrated according to Christian ordinance of "solemnization of holy matrimony" strictly prohibits divorce based on certain scriptural injunctions (e.g., Luke 16:18, etc.). In the event of a marriage break down the woman is tagged a deviant and blamed for failure to submit to her husband's authority (Eitzen & Zinn, 2001). She loses her social worth, status, respect, relationships, opportunities and home (matrimonial and maternal). Divorce evokes resentful attitude, stigma and prejudice towards a divorcee, especially the woman, (Nwauzor & Udoyen, 2018), for bringing shame to herself, family, church, community, as she faces a more painful option in divorce. The Islamic law however allows a man to divorce his wife by mere repudiation and declaration of "I divorce you" three times (known as 'Talak').

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study adopted the cross-sectional survey design using both qualitative and quantitative research techniques to interrogate the research questions and to elicit relevant data for the study. In the absence of any approved sampling frame for online surveys, the research depended on convenience sampling and a saturation rate of 400 responses from women only in different states in Nigeria. Additionally, ten (10) participants were purposively selected from the sample for In-depth interviews. For data collection, a questionnaire designed specifically to be completed by respondents was employed for the collection of quantitative data, while an open-structured interview schedule was used for the in-depth interview. Although different variables were captured in the process of data collection, only the variables of interest such as age of respondents, education level, religion, marital status, types of occupation, number of years in marriage and marital experiences relating to intimate partner violence, were selected for analysis. Data collected for the study were evaluated using univariate and bivariate analysis. At the univariate level, percentage analysis, frequency tables and charts were used to examine the socio-demographic information of the respondents as well as all other variables considered suitable for univariate analysis. Bivariate analysis, which involves the simultaneous examination of the relationship between two variables, was also employed to test the relationship between selected myths about marriage and the phenomenon of enduring IPV in marriage. Furthermore, data from the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, while the results from the quantitative analysis were presented in tables, charts, and graphs.

RESULTS***Socio-Demographic information of participants*****Table 4.1: Socio-Demographic distribution of participants**

Variables	Marital Status (n=400)	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	<i>Female</i>	400	100.0
	<i>Male</i>	0	0.0
Age	<i>18 – 27</i>	63	15.8
	<i>28 – 37</i>	101	25.2
	<i>38 – 47</i>	131	32.7
	<i>48 – 57</i>	72	18.0
	<i>58 Above</i>	33	8.3
Religion	<i>Christianity</i>	239	59.8
	<i>Islam</i>	83	20.7
	<i>None</i>	28	7.0
	<i>Others</i>	50	12.5
Education level	<i>Primary School</i>	40	10.0
	<i>Secondary School</i>	67	16.8
	<i>Tertiary</i>	223	55.7
	<i>Others (professional)</i>	49	12.2
	<i>None</i>	21	5.3
Occupation	<i>Public Sector</i>	179	44.8
	<i>Private Sector</i>	97	24.2
	<i>Self-employed</i>	71	17.7
	<i>Unemployed</i>	31	7.8
	<i>Student</i>	22	5.5
Number of years in marriage	<i>1 – 4</i>	61	15.3
	<i>5 – 9</i>	111	27.8
	<i>10 – 14</i>	130	32.5
	<i>15 – 19</i>	87	21.8
	<i>20 Above</i>	11	2.8

Source: Field survey, 2022

As shown in Table 4.1, the survey included only female respondents who have all been married. Most of the respondents, i.e., 32.7%, were between the ages of 39 and 47 years, and 25.2% were between 18 – 27 years, while only 8.3% of the respondents were 58 years of age and above. Furthermore, 59.8% of the respondents indicated that they are Christians, 20.7% stated that they were Muslims, and another 12.5% stated that they belonged to other faiths, such as: African Traditional religion and Judaism. Only 5.3% of the respondents indicated that they have no

religion. Whereas most of the respondents work in the public sector, 24.2% work in private firms, while 7.8% were unemployed and another 5.5% were students. On the number of years respondents have been married, Table 4.2 show that 32.5% of the respondents have been married for 10 – 14 years, and another 27.8% have been married for 5 – 9 years; however, only 2.8% have been in marriage for 20 years and above. The implication of this information is that the respondents have the requisite characteristics and socio-demographic spread for a study of this nature.

IPV experiences of respondents

Table 4.2: Have you ever experienced IPV?

<i>Ever experienced IPV</i>	<i>Variables</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
	<i>Yes, constantly</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>15.8</i>
	<i>Yes, very often</i>	<i>129</i>	<i>32.3</i>
	<i>Yes, sometimes</i>	<i>171</i>	<i>42.8</i>
	<i>Yes, once</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>9.3</i>
	<i>No, never</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0.0</i>
	<i>Total</i>	<i>400</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Source: Field survey, 2022

To examine the IPV experiences of women, the survey first explored the extent to which the respondents have experienced IPV. In Table 4.2, all the respondents indicated that they have experienced IPV in their marriage. However, 42.8% of the respondents stated that they experience IPV sometimes; 32.3% stated that they experience IPV very often, 15.8% experience IPV constantly, while only 9.3% have experienced IPV on one occasion.

As shown in Figure 4.1, the respondents indicated that IPV experiences in their marriage include physical abuse, such as: kicking, slapping, hitting with fists, use of weapons, and choking. The survey showed that 35.3% of the respondents' experience slapping and another 13.5% experience hitting with fists. Other physical abuse highlighted by 22.0% of the population include shoving, biting, scratching, restraining, and burning with hot liquid (such as tea, etc). The survey also shows that 43.3% of the respondents have experienced denial of sex, forced sex (8.5%), forced abortion (5.8%), and violence during sex (5.3%). Another 23.0% of the respondents indicated that they have experienced other forms of sexual IPV such as forcible sodomy and drug-enhanced sexual assault. On the types of emotional IPV experienced by respondents in their marriages, 35.3% of the respondents indicated that they experience nagging, 23.3% indicated that they experience verbal abuse, and 10.8% of the respondents indicated that they experience intimidation from their partners. Only 5.3% stated that they experience other forms of emotional violence such as gaslighting, rejection, blaming, and emotional blackmailing, while 2.8% indicated that they experience none. Figure 4.1 also show that respondents have also experienced different financial IPV such as preventing from working (23.5%), forceful control of assets (14.8%), sabotage of work (13.3%), while 22.0% of the respondents have experienced others forms of financial IPV

such as: withholding assistance, reckless spending of household resources, and forced sale of valuables.

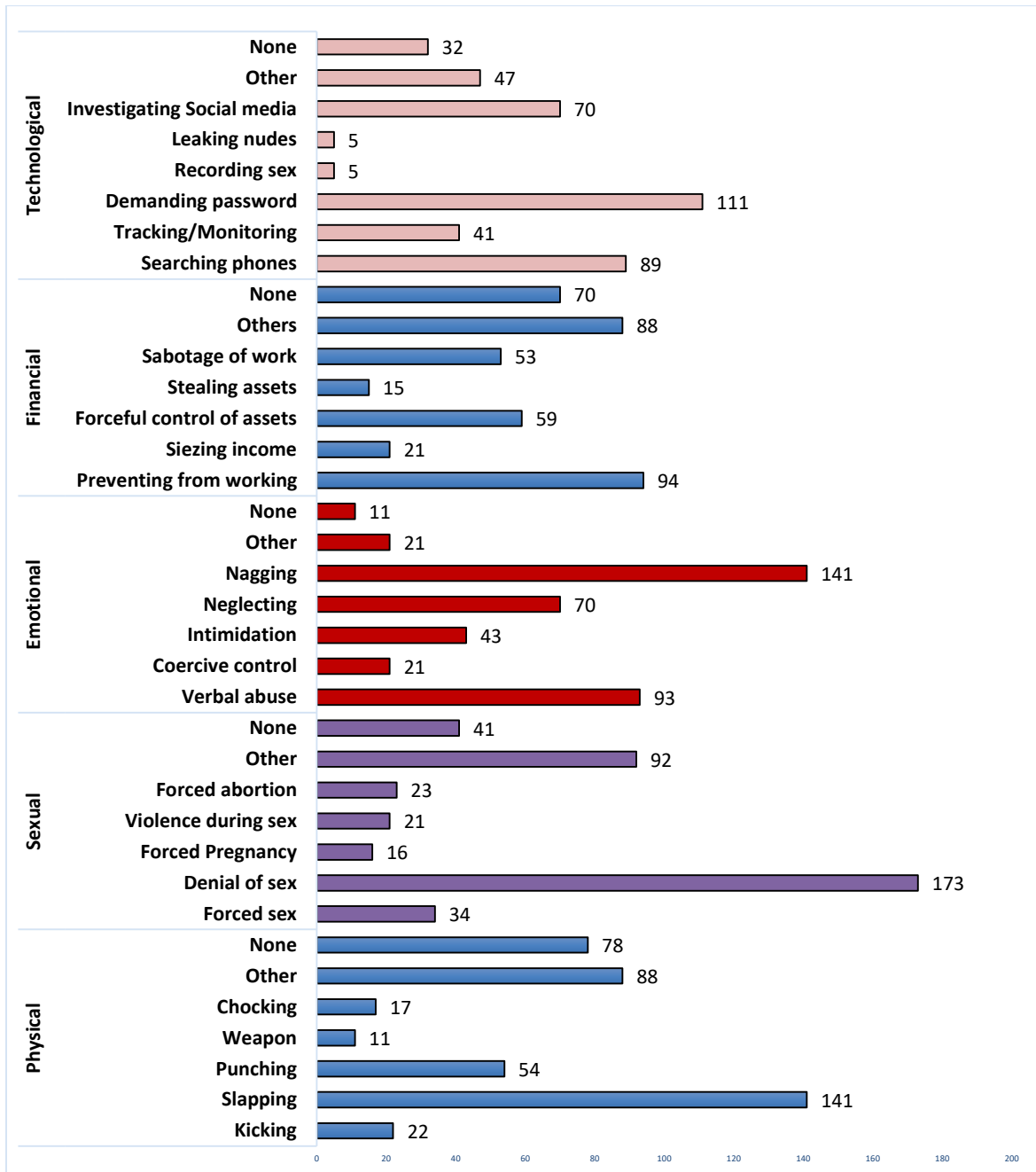


Figure 4.1: IPV experiences of Respondents. Source: Field survey, 2022

The survey also revealed that technological IPV is also common among the respondents, particularly: demanding password (27.8%), searching of phones (22.3%), investigating social

media activities (17.5%), and tracking/monitoring itinerary (10.3%). However, 11.8% of the respondents indicated that they experience other forms of technological partner abuse such as: sending abusive texts, threat voice notes, demanding pictures or video calls to prove location, restricting from using phones, and forbidding from using certain phone applications (e.g., WhatsApp, Facebook, etc)

Risk-Factors and Predictors of IPV in marriage

Table 4.3: Common triggers of Intimate Partner Violence in marriage

<i>n=400</i>	<i>Variables</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
<i>IPV triggers in Marriage</i>	<i>Insecurity</i>	59	14.8
	<i>Alcohol/Drug use</i>	29	7.3
	<i>Jealousy</i>	87	21.8
	<i>Ego bruising</i>	101	25.3
	<i>Economic hardship</i>	33	8.3
	<i>Nagging</i>	91	22.8
	<i>Total</i>	400	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2022

To assess the risk-factors and predictors of IPV in marriage, the survey first investigated the common triggers of IPV in the marriage of respondents. As shown in Table 4.3, respondents indicated that ego issues (25.3%), nagging (22.8%), jealousy (21.8%), insecurity or self-doubt (14.8%), economic hardship (8.3%) and alcohol/drug use (7.3%), are common IPV triggers in marriages.

Similarly, results from the thematic analysis of the interviews produced three (3) themes related to the findings above, and showed that predictors and triggers of IPV in marriage can be traced to personal factors, interpersonal factors and societal factors:

(a) Triggers of IPV in marriage – Personality factors:

Responses from the interviews showed that personal factors such as age, maturity, level of education, jealousy, level of self-esteem, conflict management skills, and extent of belief in gender roles, can contribute to IPV in marriages. For instance, some of the participants explained that:

I always tell people that, violence, or what did you call it... intimate partner... err... IPV... is not only caused by what people focus on, like drunkenness, poverty, and so on (sic). Sometimes it is out of jealousy... too much love, and the feeling that you own and should control your partner. As a young wife then, my husband policed me every day and everywhere. And on many occasions, we had serious domestic issues over mere greetings and compliments from other men Simple greetings o! That is part of the problem (IDI: Female, 42 years).

As a guidance and counselling teacher, I have come to understand that there are angles to this issue of domestic violence. Age can be a factor. Also, level of exposure in handling insecurity or jealousy, and most importantly, one's level of belief in these gender prejudices (IDI: Female, 37 years).

(b) Triggers of IPV in marriage – Interpersonal factors:

Evidences from the in-depth interviews further show that relational issues such as disagreements, discontent from failed expectations, separation/divorce processes, unhealthy social networks, and unhealthy family relationships, are also predictors and triggers of IPV in marriages. On this, some of the participants noted that:

For me, this marital violence issue is complex. One can say it is from poor character or violent experiences from childhood, but external interferences can also trigger IPV in marriages (sic). For example, one of the issues I constantly have with my husband are my in-laws, his family! It is so bad that the siblings sometimes come to the house to confront me! Yes! Because of these my family and his don't agree, and that makes us quarrel and fight constantly (IDI, Female, 33 years). Domestic violence or IPV often occurs when what ties your marriage begin to fade. If the love is sour, or there is a stranger out there, or one begins to listen to bad peer advice, then it is inviting disagreements that lead to domestic violence (sic). My first marriage ended when my husband started listening to his friends, and things changed. He became overly suspicious, cruel and neglected I and the kids (IDI, Female, 55 years).

(c) Triggers of IPV in marriage – Societal factors:

Majority of the study participants also indicated that, beyond personality and relationship issues, the social environment can also unsuspectingly approve IPV in marriages. For instance, in societies where traditional gender norms prescribe domestic abuse as a way to control one's partner, or societies where there are weak social policies protecting men and women from violence and abuse, IPV is likely to occur unabated. Below is the account of some of the participants:

What happens when partner abuse is condoned by culture? Or people around you don't see it as bad? That is the situation in Nigeria. Culture, religion, and the law somehow support partner abuse. In fact, some will tell you that if you don't discipline women and girls, they will become wayward and disrespectful! So, you find people using all kinds of chastisement to achieve this (sic). It is bad! (IDI, Female, 29 years).

Fact is, partner violence thrives in societies where there is an unspoken approval for it. In Nigeria, partner abuse occur freely, and very few are punished for it. That shows a gap in our legal system. Even religious doctrines and cultural practices! You will still find in Nigeria some cultures and religion that still encourage wife beating, forceful control of wife's assets, wife eviction, marital rape, etc (IDI, Female, 45 years)

4.2.3 Reasons women hold to justify enduring IPV in marriage

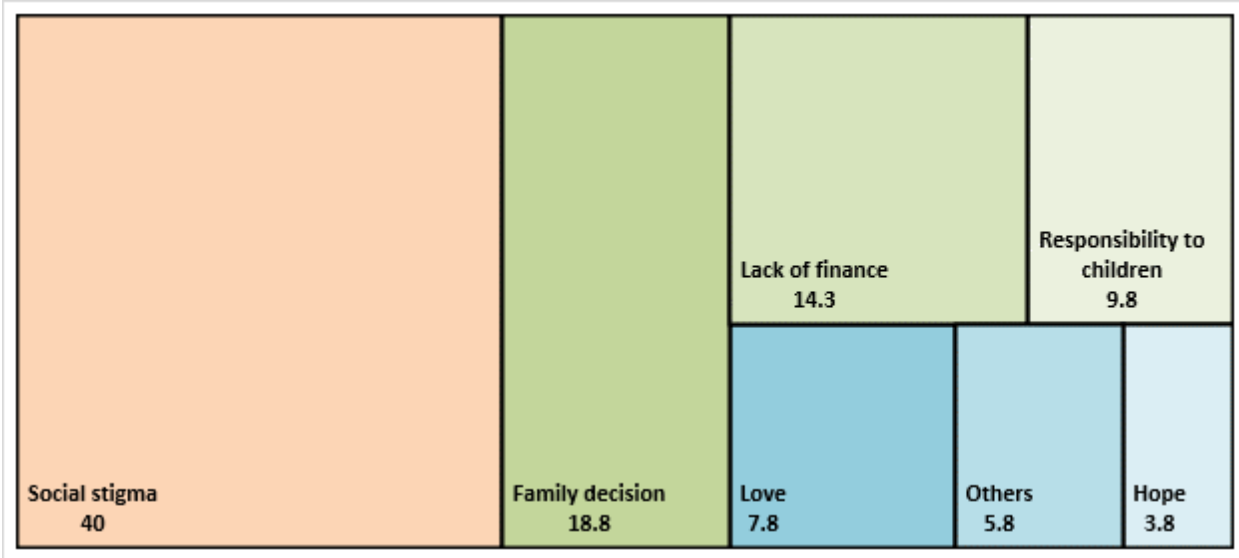


Figure 4.2: Reasons for enduring IPV in marriage. Source: Field survey, 2022

The survey also investigated some of the reasons women hold to justify enduring IPV in marriage. As shown in Figure 4.2, some of the respondents, i.e., 40.0%, stated that the social stigma attached to separation and divorce is what makes them endure IPV in their marriage. Others indicated family decision (18.8%), lack of finance (14.3%), responsibility to children (9.8%), and love (7.8%). However, 5.8% of the respondents stated that other reasons such as joint financial investments, perceived reduced chances of remarrying and marital vows are some of the things that make them endure IPV in marriage.

To further assess the validity of the qualitative data, the survey also examined the perception of the respondents in relation to some myths associated with enduring IPV in marriage.

Table 4.4: It is expected of a woman to endure IPV in marriage

Years in Marriage	SA	%	A	%	Neutral	%	SD	%	D	%	Total
1 – 4	14	3.5	25	6.3	6	1.5	8	2.0	8	2.0	61
5 – 9	23	5.8	55	13.8	9	2.3	12	3.0	12	3.0	111
10 – 14	30	7.5	73	18.3	8	2.0	11	2.8	8	2.0	130
15 – 19	17	4.3	39	9.8	7	1.8	9	2.3	15	3.8	87
20 Above	2	0.5	4	1.0	1	0.3	2	0.5	2	0.5	11
Total	86	21.5	196	49.0	31	7.8	42	10.5	45	11.3	400

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 4.4 shows that 49.0% of the respondents agree that it is expected of a woman to endure IPV in marriage. Similarly, 21.5% of the respondents strongly agree; however, 10.5% of the respondents strongly disagree, alongside another 11.3% that also disagree. What flows from this is that majority of respondents agree that women ought to endure IPV in marriage.

Table 4.5: It is contrary to culture and religious injunctions to leave a marriage, even if abusive

<i>Years in Marriage</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>1 – 4</i>	12	3.0	22	5.5	5	1.3	10	2.5	12	3.0	61
<i>5 – 9</i>	19	4.8	62	15.5	5	1.3	10	2.5	15	3.8	111
<i>10 – 14</i>	24	6.0	70	17.5	6	1.5	11	2.8	19	4.8	130
<i>15 – 19</i>	12	3.0	40	10.0	5	1.3	10	2.5	20	5.0	87
<i>20 Above</i>	3	0.8	5	1.3	1	0.3	1	0.3	1	0.3	11
<i>Total</i>	70	17.5	199	49.8	22	5.5	42	10.5	67	16.8	400

Source: Field survey, 2022

Majority of the respondents also agree that it is contrary to cultural and religious injunctions to leave a marriage, even if it is abusive. As shown in Table 4.5, whereas 10.5% of the respondents strongly disagree and another 16.8% disagree, 49.8% and 17.5% of the respondents agree and strongly agree respectively that culture and religion abhor leaving a marriage, even if it is abusive. Only 5.5% of the respondents were neutral.

Table 4.6: Women who leave their marriages loses their home, self-worth and respect

<i>Variable (Age)</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>18 – 27</i>	9	2.3	14	3.5	4	1.0	19	4.8	17	4.3	63
<i>28 – 37</i>	17	4.3	30	7.5	6	1.5	31	7.8	17	4.3	101
<i>38 – 47</i>	29	7.3	54	13.5	5	1.3	26	6.5	17	4.3	131
<i>48 – 57</i>	10	2.5	31	7.8	6	1.5	10	2.5	15	3.8	72
<i>57 Above</i>	10	2.5	12	3.0	4	1.0	3	0.8	4	1.0	33
<i>Total</i>	75	18.8	141	35.3	25	6.3	89	22.3	70	17.5	400

Source: Field survey, 2022

On how the society perceive women who leave their marriage, again more persons agree that women who leave their marriage lose their homes, their self-worth and respect. For instance, 35.3% of the respondents agree and another 18.9% also strongly agree that women who leave their marriages lose not only their homes, but also their self-worth and respect in society. Whereas 22.3% of the respondents strongly disagree, and other 17.5% disagree, the data still implies that more persons accept that society sees women who leave their marriages as losing their substance as a woman.

Table 4.7: Societal level biases/false beliefs, cultural and religious ideals contribute to enduring IPV in marriage

<i>Variables (Age)</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>18 - 27</i>	14	3.5	28	7.0	6	1.5	5	1.3	10	2.5	63
<i>28 - 37</i>	24	6.0	57	14.3	5	1.3	5	1.3	10	2.5	101
<i>38 - 47</i>	30	7.5	80	20.0	9	2.3	6	1.5	6	1.5	131
<i>48 - 57</i>	13	3.3	31	7.8	9	2.3	8	2.0	11	2.8	72
<i>57 Above</i>	7	1.8	10	2.5	5	1.3	5	1.3	6	1.5	33
<i>Total</i>	88	22.0	206	51.5	34	8.5	29	7.3	43	10.8	400

Source: Field survey, 2022

Furthermore, the study found that an overwhelming majority of the respondents strongly agree (51.5%) and agree (22.0%) respectively that social societal level biases or false beliefs, as well as cultural and religious ideals, contribute to enduring IPV in marriage. As shown in Table 4.7, only 7.3% strongly disagreed alongside another 10.8% that disagree, while 8.5% of the respondents were neutral.

Test of Hypothesis

The study hypothesises that societal level biases/false beliefs and expectations on cultural and religious ideals about marriage are positively linked to women's tolerance and endurance of IPV in marriage. The null hypothesis would imply no relationship.

Table 4.8: Contingency table for Societal level biases, culture, religion and IPV

<i>Variables</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>18 - 27</i>	14 (13.86) [0.00]	28 (32.44) [0.61]	6 (5.36) [0.08]	5 (4.57) [0.04]	10 (6.77) [1.54]	63
<i>28 - 37</i>	24 (22.22) [0.14]	57 (52.02) [0.48]	5 (8.59) [1.50]	5 (7.32) [0.74]	10 (10.86) [0.07]	101
<i>38 - 47</i>	30 (28.82) [0.05]	80 (67.46) [2.33]	9 (11.14) [0.41]	6 (9.50) [1.29]	6 (14.08) [4.64]	131
<i>48 - 57</i>	13 (15.84) [0.51]	31 (37.08) [1.00]	9 (6.12) [1.36]	8 (5.22) [1.48]	11 (7.74) [1.37]	72
<i>57 Above</i>	7 (7.26) [0.01]	10 (17.00) [2.88]	5 (2.80) [1.72]	5 (2.39) [2.84]	6 (3.55) [1.70]	33
<i>Total</i>	88	206	34	29	43	400

At $\alpha = .05$, X^2 value is 28.76 and p -value is .0256. Source: Field survey, 2022

A chi-square analysis was performed to examine the relation between societal level biases/false beliefs (culture, religion) and enduring IPV in marriage. The chi-square method recommends that the relation between two or more variables are significant when $p < .05$, and insignificant when

$p > .05$. As such when the $p < .05$, we reject the null hypothesis, and fail to reject it when $p > .05$. For the study, the X^2 value is 28.76 and the p-value is .0256, which implies that the result is significant at alpha level of .05, and infers strong evidence for the alternative hypothesis that societal level biases/false beliefs and expectations on cultural and religious ideals about marriage are positively linked to women's tolerance and endurance of IPV in marriage. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Different studies have shown that IPV is a prevalent social problem with far-reaching health and socio-economic consequences (Benebo, *et al*, 2018; Clark & Yount, 2018; Abraham & Tastsoglou, 2016; Dim, 2018), and many people, especially women who are more at risk, are exposed to it owing to factors such as unemployment, low education, disability, low-income, and social lifestyle, among others (UN, 2022; Clark & Yount, 2018; WHO, 2013). Beyond the popularly held beliefs as to why women endure IPV in marriage, this study provides empirical data that societal level biases or false beliefs, as well as cultural and religious ideals, contribute to enduring IPV in marriage. Common reasons held by women who endure IPV include: social stigma attached to separation and divorce, family decision, lack of finance, responsibility to children, perceived reduced chances of remarrying, and sanctity of marital vows of 'for better or worse'. The study also show that predictors of IPV in marriage are tripartite, and include: personal factors (such as maturity, jealousy, level of self-esteem, conflict management skills, and extent of belief in gender roles, etc), relational issues (such as disagreements, discontent from failed expectations, separation/divorce processes, unhealthy social networks, and unhealthy family relationships), and societal factors (such as traditional gender norms, social policies protecting men and women from violence and abuse, efficiency of justice system, etc). The implications of these are that in societies where there is no proper control of these three factors, IPV is likely to be prevalent and victims are most likely to endure it. Correspondingly, the findings of the study also show that many agree that it is contrary to cultural and religious injunctions to leave a marriage, even if it is abusive; and most importantly, women who leave their marriage are perceived to have lost not only their homes, but also their self-worth and respect. These results find meaning in the Social Norm approach and Feminist Intersectionality frameworks as employed in the study. The Social Norm approach suggests that women endure IPV in marriage largely because there is social expectation for them and others to do so in victimisation (Clark & Yount, 2018; Bicchieri, 2016; Linos *et al*, 2013). Enduring IPV in marriage is thus driven by the belief that IPV is an integral part of marriage and enduring it indicates submission, commitment, and success in marriage. The Feminist Intersectionality approach on the other hand argues that women are differentially oppressed by the varied intersections of systems of inequality, including inequality in marital relationships and IPV in marriage serves to underwrite the gender inequality in the society (Hearn, 2013; Collins, 1999; Crenshaw, 1991). In conclusion, IPV in Nigeria has remained prevalent and vulnerable women endure it in marriage largely because traditional gender norms endorse it, while weak justice system and state policies lend credence to its existence. Religion has also been found to provide

the justification for enduring IPV and restricting the choices of women in toxic marital relationships.

Recommendations

To efficiently address the prevalence of IPV in Nigeria and protect vulnerable groups from its physiological and socio-economic outcomes, the study recommends:

- 1) There is the need to develop a protective environment for women against societal, cultural and religious ideals that encourage gender inequality and violence against women.
- 2) Vulnerable women should be able to access unrestricted legal support when opting out of an abusive marital relationship.
- 3) Societal ideals, cultural beliefs and religious beliefs that compel women to endure IPV in marriage must also be abolished to allow women make uncriticized decisions in life-threatening situations.

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