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Influence of Religion on Domestic Violence in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria

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Abstract

Domestic violence, which is described as a social ill is common in the Nigerian society with women bearing the greater burden of its negative consequences. The specific objectives of this study is to investigate the effect of religion on domestic violence, perceptions of religious leaders on domestic violence, respondent's perception on the role of religion in addressing domestic violence, factors influencing domestic violence and factors that may affect the role of religion on domestic violence among men and women. Through mixed-method approach, 415 respondents were recruited using a multi-stage sampling technique. Results show that religion continues to be a dominant force that contributes to domestic violence. Women experience violence in the form of physical beating, emotional violence, sexual violence and verbal violence. Also, religion influences domestic violence and the perceptions of both sexes on violence may have implications for women's development and society generally. Factors influencing domestic violence include religion, marital status, income level, job description, age at marriage and other factors. Conversely, religion plays a role in curbing domestic violence. The study therefore concludes that religion is crucial in addressing domestic violence. There is a need for religious leaders to help reduce the rate of domestic violence by bridging the gap between males and females.

Keywords: Religion, domestic violence, religiosity, gender equality, education

Introduction

One of the most heinous crimes that is detrimental to the well-being of society is domestic violence (Ramzan, Parveen & Rubab, 2022). Domestic violence is

considered a private issue before now and as such no interventions were made towards address it. However, sociologists view it as a serious offense that is detrimental to the society as a whole. The patterns, trends and forms of violence is not peculiar to Nigeria. Ramzan, Parveen and Rubab, (2022) conclude that, the effects of domestic violence has short-term effects such as lack of immunity, gastrointestinal disorders, fatigue, low energy, chronic pain, loss of appetite and eating disorders among others while its long term effects include reduced self-esteem, poor work performance, negative implications for the growth of children, psychological disorder for both the victims and child upbringing and lack of confidence for children.

Thus, domestic violence is a curse towards the development of modern society and requires collective efforts in reducing and eliminating any occurrence of any act of violence. Adam and Erhus (2022) opined that violence is obviously regarded as a public health challenge especially for developing countries like Nigeria of which during the pandemic the rising incidence of violence was recorded against women through their findings in determining the prevalence of domestic violence against women during the pandemic using urban community in Southern Nigeria. The study revealed a high prevalence of domestic violence in one year against women in the community. While, psychological and physical violence were most prevalent and perpetrated by intimate partners of these women (Adam & Erhus, 2022). Thus, the need for routine education against violence for women and educational workshops and programmes for men in the prevention of violence.

Domestic Violence which is described as a subset of Gender-based Violence (GBV) Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Family Violence (FV) remains an important discourse. However, violence is experienced by both men and women but the case of women still remains high. Although, men have to go through violence in the form of physical abuse, emotional and verbal abuse where they receive missiles in the form of abusive words from their wives. The verbal form of abuse is common for men and has made some men default marital vows by keeping late nights and for some, would have to stay over at bars with other strange partners as accomplices, while some men see it as a coping mechanism to stay away from their troublesome wives and also make them feel relaxed. Despite, violence against men in whatever form, women still face the square of violence the more. Religion is regarded as a protagonist. Oke (2021) concludes that a relationship exists between religion and domestic violence and is inclusive of the society at large where religion is a predominant force as Karl Marx's put it "Religious is the Opium of the People" the rate of violence is very high for women and the two most practice religion are Islam and Christianity. Oke (2021) asserts that; the citadel of Chauvinism is religious houses that are the oppressors of women in our country. Their influence cannot be overemphasized but they also possess power over millions of their worshippers. The doctrines and preaching of these religious leaders are strongly held by their believers where the women folk are commanded to be totally "submissive" just like Christ is the head of the church, so also men are

the heads of the house and the men must bruise the heel of the woman in all circumstances, the woman is been rebuked if been found guilty and the man has been exonerated if nasty. In the same vein, Chaudhry & Cattaneo (2023) findings revealed that, the more religious people are, the more they are likely to seek for religious help in cases of intimate partner violence. Accordingly, the scholars assert that, religion is crucial in religious help-seeking: those who belong to the Christian group will seek for more religious help than those who are of the Muslim religion. This statement affirms the degree of submissiveness that women must practice in order to sustain their marriages.

It is evident, to see a woman misbehave and such behaviour is not been directed to the woman and is the main lead for discussions. Unfortunately, both religions (Islam and Muslim) doctrinal principles reference women as slaves to their men; a nod and a wink to the impulsive hatred among men. Thus, an argument is generated on men's power for violence against women. Due to shame and stigma and the fear of the unknown, women still experience violence from their male counterparts and would not speak out. As Bourke (2020) puts it: Violence continues to reoccur for women and constantly affects all aspects of their lives, which includes their modes of dressing and the kind of friends they keep, for some they are not allowed to go outside the house except with the permission of their husbands while for some they are forced to indulge in certain burial rites, for instance, a woman whose husband had died in a particular culture in Nigeria is meant to sit on the mat for a number of days until all burial rites are performed most especially if the husband holds a chieftaincy title.

Victims of domestic violence keep to themselves and may not be willing to report even to their friends or family members due to shame even if faced with the greater part of the shame. Feelings of embarrassment and stigma attached to being victimized. Accordingly, women try to endure toxic relationships or marriages that are detrimental to their health to sustain and keep to marital vows of "for better, for worse, till death do us part" and the perception that divorce is not the right way to go rather a forgiveness of each other's wrong is eternal as seen in the Holy Scriptures. Thus, the connotation of some Christian denominations (Pentecostal churches) that do not embrace divorce for any reason in spite of what the woman may go through and the preacher or minister is constantly encouraging both partners to be prayerful and mindful of the devices of the devil in their homes and marriages. Acts of violence have far-reaching consequences with lots of impacts on women and their families at large including their children who go through such learning experiences and become potential abusers in their future relationships. For some women, they are faced with depression as a result of the trauma of being mentally abused and emotional imbalance would make them engage in risky behaviours like excessive intake of alcohol that may lead to untimely death or heart problems.

Today, women are faced with all forms of violence from men either married or those in intimate partner relationships. These forms of violence cause pains such as physical and emotional or both of them. Some women,

they try to endure and save their homes like the case of the Nigerian Gospel Singer popularly known as “Osinachi” who died in the year 2022, as a result of maltreatment and abuse from her husband (Salami, 2022). While for some women they may decide to go back home to their families to avoid stories that touch the heart in the form of death or been maimed. Several sources revealed the prevalence of domestic violence during the period of the pandemic which corroborates the findings of Sharifi *et al.* (2020) assert that, women and young girls were faced with violence due to stay-at-home orders by the government. Similarly, Shahid-Iheanacho (2021) reported that, domestic violence cases increased in Nigeria, especially during the lockdown period.

Domestic violence still remains a global issue that requires global attention. This case is not peculiar to Nigeria alone. Discussions surround violence that women face either by their husbands or other males in the society. Although, violence commonly regarded as Gender Based Violence (GBV) implies any harm that is been inflicted upon an individual or group of individuals as regards their sex. However, men on the other hand, are not excluded from acts of violence. Particularly, that women are mostly vulnerable and are regarded as the weaker sex. Women experience more of domestic violence and are majorly seen as the victims while the men are regarded as the perpetrators. The various forms of domestic violence range from physical, verbal, economic, psychological, social and emotional violence. The perception of the society over women places them at the extreme end of inhumane abuses Nzeh Atracta (2022). Religion has been ascertained to be responsible for the increase in violence against women as its doctrines ensure women/wives be in total submission to their husbands (Ephesians 5: 22-24). Though, the society in which we live is rooted in norms, culture and traditions that have empowered men over time to be a dominant force over their counterparts. Shaw, B., Stevanovic-Fenn, Gibson, Davin, Chipanta, Lubin & Quirke (2023) assessed shifting norms in faith communities and how these norms can help to reduce Intimate Partner Violence in Nigeria. Findings revealed that, participants hold in high esteem existing norms and religious texts in reducing violence. In pursuant to the above, women are regarded as subordinates to their spouses in some cultures, whereas the case may be different from other cultures where women are deprived of their human/reproductive rights through forceful engagement of women and young girls in female genital mutilation (FGM) putting them at risk with other health challenges (Nzeh Atracta, Ugwulebo & Okoro Ugonna (2022). Thus, it is imperative for religious institutions to create an avenue for divorce alongside certificates that supports it most especially as some churches wouldn't support divorce and the need for counselling to help perpetrators desist from such act of violence. Also, curriculum on Domestic violence must be included across the school curriculum to abolish these ugly tides.

Nigeria, which is a patriarchal society, is majorly dominated by men. Today, the major ethnic groups including Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba give men the absolute power to have total control over women in all domestic affairs.

More so, given the control of men over women, women seem not to have control over their reproductive health and decision-making regarding what matters to them, placing women in a secondary role. Unfortunately, women still remain marginalized and neglected over decisions that matter to them. The gap in power differentials continually increases the rate of domestic violence on a daily basis. This makes it pertinent to analyse the role of religion in the prevalence of domestic violence against women. Domestic violence still remains an emerging and re-emerging issue in our society where women constitute more than half of the entire population. Yet, only a few cases of domestic violence is reported to appropriate authorities daily. The majority of women do not want to report cases of domestic violence owing to cultural, socioeconomic and religious factors that may serve as a barrier for women. This study provides insight into a deeper picture of domestic violence. The role of religious leaders in addressing violence. It provides useful information for both government and non-governmental organizations including religious institutions and organizations that seek to fight for women's rights.

The aim of this study is to investigate religion and domestic violence in the Ibadan metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria from the perspectives of both men and women. This study serves as a guide for planning and execution for religious, governmental and non-governmental organizations in carrying out initiatives, programmes and activities designed for men and women. The general objective of this study was to investigate the role of religion in domestic violence in the Ibadan metropolis. Underlying the above, this chapter examined the relationship that exists between religion and domestic violence in Ibadan Metropolis. It also identifies the perceptions of religious leaders on domestic violence in Ibadan and examines respondent's perceptions on the role of religion in domestic violence in the Ibadan metropolis. Identifying, factors influencing domestic violence in the Ibadan metropolis and identify factors that may affect the role of religion on domestic violence is discussed. Thus, the need for this study is to investigate the role of religion on domestic violence in the Ibadan metropolis. However, a paucity of data is still not available to investigate these issues including women who are victims of domestic violence.

Concept of domestic violence

According to World Health Organization (WHO), violence is defined as the intentional use of force whether physical or power, that is aimed toward a threat of oneself or another person, group or community that may result in the likelihood of injury, death, mal-development, psychological harm or deprivation (Saferspaces, 2022). The Meriam-Webstar Online Dictionary (2022), defines domestic violence as the use of physical force directed at injure, abuse, damage or to destroy. The above definitions imply use of physical force that results to injury on the individual. Although, domestic violence can take different forms ranging from physical, cultural, psychological, financial, verbal, spiritual, sexual and emotional. It is physical

when the individual experiencing violence is been inflicted with injury using physical objects. These objects are but not limited to the use of a knife, stone or any other object that could be deadly. In some cases, it may be that the victim is been kicked or hit by an object. On the hand, when an individual experience violence as a result of cultural practices is referred to as cultural violence. These practices are termed very annoying, a good example is female genital mutilation and some other harmful cultural practices that are melted upon individuals as punishment or adhering to the dictates of a culture.

While violence that inflicts fear upon an individual is regarded as psychological violence, thereby causing fear for the victim; financial violence is when the income of an individual is been controlled by a partner and denied control over it without consent, for instance, a woman may not be allowed to gain financial power or having access to ownership of assets in her husband house, for some she must not earn more than her husband vice-versa; an individual may also use words upon another, this is termed verbal violence. The kind of words thrown upon an individual can cause great mental trauma especially derogatory manner. Violence also takes spiritual forms where an individual is been attacked through his or her religion although, this may take different forms which may be that a partner not professing the religion of an abuser or the abuser has been prosecuted for not embracing or practicing the religion. Religion is a strong force and most recently, in the case of the young Deborah who was mobbed to death for professing her religion by another group. This is common but salient as so many people wouldn't want to discuss it as a result of fear.

Today, we see a Muslim marrying a Muslim and Christian marrying a Christian so as to avoid the religious crisis in marriage, it is difficult to see it the other way around as parents would give a stern warning to their children on their partner's religious background. This tide takes different forms, in another case, the abused may not be ready to convert to the religion of the abuser and is seen as unclean or unrighteous and could lead to either partner abandoning themselves for that cause; the act of forcefully engaging in sex with the individual without the consent of the abused is regarded as sexual violence and lastly, is when an individual is brought down to the level of a nobody by another leading to emotional distress.

The United Nations defines Domestic violence as any form or pattern of behaviour exhibited in any relationship used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner which could be physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or a threat of action that influences another individual (Morohunfola, 2021). Domestic Violence can also be referred to a social phenomenon that spreads across all forms of violence inflicted within a domestic sphere by a family member on another member, which can be in the form of stalking, physical, sexual and emotional violence; including child abuse which extends across sexual, physical, emotional abuse and neglect (Ilesanmi *et al.*, 2020; Ekweonu, 2020).

This study was descriptive and cross-sectional in nature. Thus, both quantitative and qualitative method of data collection was employed. Systematic, multi-stage and purposive sampling techniques were used in selecting respondents for this study. The total sample size for this research was 400. A total of 5 key informants' interviews with religious leaders (Muslim (2) and 2 Christian) and 1 director of women's affairs in the Ibadan Metropolis. The justification for this is that these categories of people have the potential of providing information on religion and domestic violence. 5 case studies were conducted among victims of domestic violence and 5 in-depth interviews with men and women belonging to different denominations were also conducted. Data was collected through case studies and inquiry using in-depth semi-structured interviews with men and women (IDI) community and religious leaders (KII).

This study was conducted in Ibadan Metropolis, the capital city of Oyo State, Nigeria, the study involved selected adults who are inhabitants in the area from age 18years and above. This setting is most suitable for this type of study because the respondents have the character traits of the event under investigation. The study population for this study comprised only adults who are 18 years and above in the Ibadan metropolis. Although, data from this study was generated through a complex set of interactions comprising of women, men, community and religious leaders. Also, a multi-perspective approach on domestic violence was generated from the study population, and the disaggregation of the study participants by sects during the data collection exercise. This provided a more comprehensive picture on respondents' experiences on domestic violence are informed by religious, cultural background, geographical location, personal experiences or individual interpretation and personal choice. Also, verbal consent was sought from both men and women after the researcher had explained the procedure, risks and benefits of the study, other considerations to include voluntariness, confidentiality and privacy was adhered to.

Theoretical thrust

This study anchors on two theories namely Feminist theory and cultural theory. Feminist theory focuses on the rights of women and the need for equality to both women and men in the society. While the latter provides us with a micro-analysis in the study of domestic violence. Cultural theory has its roots in understanding the norms and values across societies and particularly how this influence domestic violence. Thus, the relevance of using both theories explore the situation women face, the social relations and the unequal power relations the bridge women's participation in development. The radical and Black feminist perspectives were employed and grounded on the belief that the society is rooted in patriarchy and leads to marginalization and discrimination of women (Teasley, 2020). The above theory originates during the second wave of feminism in the 1960s which asserts that, the main source of oppression originates from social roles and institutional structures that are a

product of male supremacy and patriarchy (Teasley, 2020). Men's oppression of women is seen as deliberate and is supported by religious and media institutions (Mattingly, 2019). Although, radical feminist advocates for the abolition of patriarchy if women are to be liberated. Institutions may not be able to play their role because of gendered disparity. However, alternate institutions such as women's organizations that seek to empower, promote and fight for women and victims of domestic violence must step up to ensure the needs of women are met (Teasley, 2020).

The study affirms the continued manifestation of violence, domination and marginalization of women by men. Domestic violence is likened to the dominance and oppression that black nations face such as racism in the football world and workplaces by the whites. In addition, to the Black feminist perspective, is the economic dependence of women on men which is also a determinant of domestic violence (Ajayi & Airewele, 2018). Although, this assertion may not be true in today's reality as women also serve as household heads and ensure the provision of basic needs for their homes even when religious and cultural norms see the man as the head of the house. Patriarchy operates within an African culture rooted in tradition, customs, beliefs and gendered division of labour for women and men, where women are expected to take full responsibility of house chores and childcare even when they are fully employed (Barry & Grandy, 2018). For instance, some women decide to stay in marriage for financial and emotional support to save their children. Furthermore, policies and institutions at the core of advocating and promotion of women's right are bedevilled by patriarchal norms influencing domestic violence together within the context of social institutions such as marriage and family in support of violence against women.

Results

Socio-demographic information of respondents

The distribution of the respondents in this study are presented with respect to the socio-demographic variables as relevant to this study. 58.5% of the respondents were between age 20-39 while 56.3% were male; singles and married were in equal ratio with 5.5% and 1.5% being divorced and separated. The majority of them were of Yoruba ethnicity (82.0%) probably because of the study area selected. Therefore, applied inferences of the outcome should be interpreted with relativity to the Yoruba race. Christians among the respondents were 52.5%; Muslims (43.5%) while Traditional worshipers were 4%. The skewness of the data in almost a 1:1 ratio distribution may imply that the findings are representative of both predominant religions in Nigeria (Christianity and Islam). The level of income is considerably low among the respondents, although 43% of them were students at the time of collection of this data. The Mean age when married was 23.8 ± 1.42 and the average number of children were discovered to be 2.6 ± 0.5 . Those with post-secondary education were 60.4%, and those married with children make up 144(36.0%) among the total 400 respondents.

Table 1: Showing socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Socio-demographics of Respondents		f	%
Age of the respondent	20-29	122	30.5
	30-39	112	28.0
	40-49	91	22.8
	50-59	56	14.0
	60 and above	19	4.8
Gender	Male	225	56.3
	Female	175	43.8
Marital Status	Single	186	46.5
	Married	186	46.5
	Divorced	22	5.5
	Separated	6	1.5
Ethnic origin	Yoruba	328	82.0
	Igbo	24	6.0
	Hausa/Yoruba	48	12.0
Religion	Christian	210	52.5
	Islam	174	43.5
	Traditional	16	4.0
Level of Income	5,000-10,000	26	6.5
	10,001-15,000	20	5.0
	15,001-20,000	30	7.5
	20,001-25,000	61	15.3
	25,001-30,000	63	15.8
	30,001-35,000	45	11.3
	35,001-40,000	65	16.3
	40,001 – 45,000	14	3.5
	45,001 - 49,999	20	5.0
	50,000 and above	56	14.0
Job description (Occupation)	Student	172	43.0
	Trader	92	23.0
	Artisan	73	18.3
	Civil servant	63	15.8

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The major dependent variable specified in this study was the experience or occurrence as well as prevalence of domestic violence. The study empirically finds that 49(12.3%) have been abused domestically. This means that more than 1 out of every 10 residents in Ibadan metropolis have experienced domestic violence. The WHO reported global prevalence was 1 out of every 3, even though any mentally traumatizing threat or human right abuse still represents a problem.

Among the five LGAs in Ibadan Metropolis, Ibadan North West had the highest 25(51.0%). The decreasing order of Domestic violence is thus: Ibadan North West (51.0%)>Ibadan North (22.4%)>Ibadan North East (14.3%)>Ibadan South West and Ibadan South East: (6.1% each).

Table 2: LGA and incidence of domestic violence

		LGA									
		Ibadan South West		Ibadan South East		Ibadan North		Ibadan North East		Ibadan North West	
Are you a victim of domestic violence?	Yes	3	6.1	3	6.1	11	22.4	7	14.3	25	51.0
	No	77	21.9	77	21.9	69	19.7	73	20.8	55	15.7

Source: Field Survey, 2022

A cross analysis (Descriptive) was conducted between Incidence of domestic violence, Gender and Religion. Domestically assaulted Females were 14.8% as compared to the male counterparts. Result shows that victims of domestic violence by religion indicates Christians (61.2%) and (34.7%) were of the Islamic Religion. The Odd ratio and significance of these cross tabulation are revealed in the report of the inferential analysis hereafter.

Table 3: Cross analysis of gender, religion and the incidence of domestic violence

	Yes		No		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Male	13	5.8	212	94.2	225	56.3
Female	36	20.6	139	79.4	175	43.7
Total	49	12.3	351	87.9	400	100.0
Christian	30	61.2	180	51.3	210	52.5
Islam	17	34.7	157	44.7	174	43.5
Traditional	2	4.1	14	4.0	16	4.0
Total	49	12.3	351	87.9	400	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 4: Relationship that exists between religion and domestic violence

	U	SA	A	D	SD
Religion serves as a mechanism for women's vulnerability	37.0	22.0	30.3	1.0	9.8
Religion functions as a protective factor against domestic violence	47.3	13.3	16.0	15.8	7.8
Religion sees domestic violence as a test to our faith	18.5	24.0	11.3	14.5	31.8
Religion encourages women to be a good wife despite domestic violence	42.5	6.5	26.3	14.2	10.5
Domestic violence is as a result of one's faith	19.8	17.8	9.5	17.0	35.0
Religion interprets domestic violence based on religious teachings	27.3	24.8	12.0	7.2	28.5

Religion encourage marriage within same denomination	39.5	13.8	25.3	17.0	3.5
Religious victims interpret victimization as divinely ordained	8.3	4.8	24.8	31.3	27.8
Religion encourages that the woman or man stick to a domestic partner	15.0	32.0	27.3	15.3	10.5

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Respondent’s perception of the roles of Religion on Domestic Violence was very unhealthy (28.7%) and Unhealthy (47.0%). This was high across the Local governments in Ibadan Metropolis. However, the statistical correlation shows a positive relationship ($p < 0.05$) with the incidence of domestic violence.

Table 5: Respondent’s perception on the role of religion on domestic violence

	U	SA	A	D	SD
Christian women are more likely to experience domestic violence	30.3	6.8	28.2	16.8	18.0
Islamic women are more likely to experience domestic violence	17.3	13.8	45.3	9.5	14.2
Religious languages perpetuates domestic violence	14.5	13.8	35.8	13.8	22.3
Religious languages reduces the risk of domestic violence	21.5	27.0	36.0	8.3	4.5
Religion creates an imbalance of power for both men and women leading to domestic violence	13.3	5.3	42.8	13.3	25.5
Religion creates notions of inequality that can lead to domestic violence	15.3	6.3	31.3	26.5	18.8
Religion supports male headship in the family thus leading to domestic violence	29.0	15.0	19.0	11.5	25.5
The notion of male leadership increases domestic violence among women	20.0	12.5	29.8	22.0	15.8
Religion promotes wife submission in cases of domestic violence	32.8	17.8	24.0	8.3	17.3
Religion encourages sanity in marriage in cases of domestic violence	6.8	24.5	54.0	11.8	3.0
How satisfied are you with the role of religious leaders on victims of domestic violence?	32.8	14.5	40.3	6.0	2.3

Source: Field Survey, 2022

From the qualitative excerpts findings reveal the following as emerged from the objectives of the study and other themes as identified.

Most people in the community misinterpret what we preach against domestic violence, we don’t encourage it and we advise women to report to us

for appropriate intervention. Thus, one of the KII participant expressed his thoughts in the following manner;

Women should speak out and always communicate with their religious leaders and don't die in silence. (*KII/Religious Leader/Christian/42years*)

Similarly, another participant believe that some women try to keep it to themselves rather women should report cases of violence to their family members or human rights. She expressed her views in the excerpts below;

“Unbearable endurance is being preached, but to me when it gets persistent its better the person opens up to family members and Human Right Social worker. So continuous suffering as being preached indirectly by some religious violent is unhealthy.” (*IDI/female/Christian/47yrs*)

Most common forms of domestic violence

Most of the participants opined that the most common forms of domestic violence in the community are men who exercise force in form of physical beating and verbal abuse. A participant revealed thus;

You know that, in our community nowadays, is majorly men who beat their wives and call them all sorts of names and them also, I mean the men also have their own part at times they don't provide for their wives and children which can result to domestic violence. (*IDI/female/Muslim/30years*)

Another participant believe that some religious leaders do not take the issue of domestic violence very likely rather they dwell more on financial prosperity of the church. This was expressed in the following excerpts;

Our preachers have gone soft on moral behaviours; they preach more on financial prosperities and get money raised without much emphasis on character development. (*IDI/Male/Christian/55years*)

Perfection and submission in marriage

One of the IDI participants expressed that perfection in marriage is not totally experienced but that both husband and wife should be submissive and loving to one another. His assertions are as follows;

Islam gave a guideline...for instance...see these wives, they are wired so and so, so expecting perfection is not practical. Similarly, “the Bible also provides a narrative that women are weaker vessels and should be related with by knowledge” Although men and women were also admonished to be mutually submissive and loving. So, the two gender must be matured and have standards of living before marriage or living together.” (*IDI/Female/Muslim/58years*)

Similarly, one of the KII participant notes that, men should always be submissive and learn to take things easy with their female counterpart in period of crisis. He expressed thus;

“We men should learn how to calm down and caution ourselves, even when the lady is ranting negatively. You just don’t react to everything. It is never acceptable for a man or a woman to resort compulsively or deliberately beat or assault his or her partner” There is a way you carry your anger and detoxify it with your word. This is the skill that many do not know. So, people should be more practical and follow the advice and admonitions. The functions should be clearly stated and hearing out the offended partner is always important i.e. before it gets worse, nip it in the bud.” (KII/Religious Leader/Muslim cleric/2022)

Table 6: Perception of religious leaders on domestic violence

	U	SA	A	D	SD
Religious leaders view domestic violence as an uncomfortable to be addressed in the house of worship.	28.5	29.3	9.8	26.5	6.0
Role of religious leaders can increase the risk of the victim	26.5	18.5	32.3	21.8	1.0
Some religion condole male violence against women	22.8	19.3	32.3	20.3	5.5
The scripture is commonly used to justify abusive behavior of men	12.0	44.8	22.5	14.2	6.5
Religiously involved individuals tend to report less aggression and more altruism	40.8	16.5	9.5	24.0	9.3
Perpetration of domestic violence is a form of individual aggression	13.8	25.5	16.8	36.8	4.5
Religious leaders see empathy as negatively related to domestic violence	36.3	21.5	38.3	3.8	0.3
Social norms regarding empathy can be powerful influences on the individual’s tendency towards domestic violence	20.8	8.3	17.0	26.0	22.0
Religious norms can be associated with pro-social and altruistic behaviors of an individual	17.8	2.0	17.8	59.3	3.5
Religion can serve as a mechanism which work to increase the likelihood of empathic intentions and behavior	26.3	18.5	16.8	31.3	4.0
Do you see domestic violence as a problem?	22.3	11.3	2.0	17.8	46.8
Does increase in domestic violence become a concern to you?	19.3	12.0	7.5	30.5	23.5

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 7: Factors influencing domestic violence

	U	SA	A	D	SD
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Lack of effective communication between partners will increase domestic violence	10.3	60.8	28.2	0.8	0.0
Unbalanced level of education can lead to domestic violence among men and women	10.5	23.3	48.5	3.0	14.8
Male ideology over marriage will lead to domestic violence	13.3	22.0	31.8	16.5	5.3
Lack of economic resources will influence domestic violence in men	19.3	31.3	30.3	18.5	0.8
Level of unemployment put both men and women at a higher risk of violence	30.8	24.8	31.5	6.3	6.8
Child marriage will lead to domestic violence	14.2	41.0	37.8	4.0	2.3
Honor killing will influence domestic violence	33.3	26.8	32.0	7.0	1.0
Individual religious beliefs and values have the power to influence domestic violence	18.0	13.0	53.8	12.3	3.0
Religion is a critical factor influencing domestic violence	19.5	17.5	27.3	21.3	14.5
Number of children in the family will influence domestic violence	33.0	27.5	13.0	18.8	7.8
Poor self-control increases the risk of violence against men and women.	3.0	24.5	64.0	8.5	0.0
Use of drugs/alcohol can trigger domestic violence for men and women	7.0	50.5	38.8	3.8	0.0

Source: Field Survey, 2022

From the qualitative findings, revealed that culture and religious values also influence domestic violence this is because certain traditions and customs alongside religious teachings encourage women to continue with an abusive partner, in most cases, it is believed that the woman had bear children and as such she continue to bear any form of disagreement. Most times, it is believed that “two married persons are in the best positions to settle any form of dispute” which is killing our women. Particularly, women are pressured to stay in their husbands’ home if otherwise she decides to leave her husband’s house the society would castigate such person.

One of the participants asserted that, the consequences attached on cases of violence are not stringent because it is seen as an abomination in some societies for a woman to report her husband. She expressed thus;

Consequences are not strong in Nigeria, it gets repeated and all you hear is admonitions, why being pressured to stay and endure because of the children. “I once had a significant order and I suddenly sensed a change in behaviour which graduated into negative reactions and resulted into physical beating and suddenly use his belt to assault me and close the door on me and monitor me. Yet he said I couldn’t love any other person that he is monitoring me, while beating and this affected my academics and I informed my mum when I couldn’t keep quiet again. I gave an excuse that the aggression was because he had no stable job but I was later free from the violence.” (*IDI/female/Christian/25yrs*)

Similarly, another participant believes that when there are no sanctions put in place to fight against domestic violence, it is impossible to reduce it in the society. He expressed his views as follows;

Raising a child should not be violent; you don't just beat a child and not tell him or her why the thing is wrong. "Lack of sanction is also a challenge limiting the fight against domestic violence."
(*KII/Religious Leader/Muslim*)

Table 8: Factors that may affect the role of religion on domestic violence

	U	SA	A	D	SD
Family decisions will affect the role of religion on domestic violence	44.8	22.0	29.8	0.5	3.0
Male authority and decision making affect the role of religion on domestic violence	32.3	16.0	48.5	3.3	0.0
Cultural beliefs and practices affects the role of religion on domestic violence	32.3	28.2	37.5	1.0	0.3
Lack of family and community support will affect the role of religion on domestic violence	33.3	22.5	38.0	3.3	0.0
Socio-cultural system affects the role of religion on domestic violence	44.0	7.5	45.5	2.8	0.3
Lack of economic empowerment affects the role of religion on domestic violence	27.3	18.0	45.8	2.8	2.5
Sex role socialization affects the role of religion on domestic violence	17.5	16.0	50.7	15.5	0.3
Attitudes towards sex role influences the role of religion on domestic violence	35.3	17.5	45.3	2.0	0.0
Poverty will affect the role of religion on domestic violence	13.0	29.5	56.3	1.3	0.0
Law and policies will affect the role of religion on domestic violence	37.3	31.0	27.0	4.8	0.0

Source: Field Survey, 2022

From the qualitative findings revealed that Parental factors interfere with how religious leaders may intervene with issues on domestic violence. Religious leaders believe that parents of both parties have a huge role to play in terms of settling disputes among two different parties ensued in violence. The following excerpts supports the above statement as expressed by the participant thus;

The parents may interfere if a cleric says separate for a while for instance, the parent may say no. The Islamic scriptures guide us about marital and intimate partners' obligation. (*KII/Religious Leader/cleric/2022*)

Furthermore, couples should always learn to read the holy Quran and abide by it to ensure peaceful coexistence in marriage and prevent domestic violence. He expressed thus;

Wonderful communication and healthy compromise, Godless attitudes and not reading the Quran together may be a reason for

lack of proper and peaceful life which results in domestic violence.” (KII/Religious leader/cleric/2022)

Table shows the logistic regression analysis to determine the weight of each factor on domestic violence in Ibadan Metropolis

Model	Beta In	T	Sig.
LGA	-.237	-5.041	.000
Age of the respondent	.298	6.104	.000
Gender	.067	1.381	.168
Marital Status	.086	1.003	.317
Ethnic origin	.101	2.103	.036
Religion	.138	2.890	.004
What is your level of Income?	-.209	-4.358	.000
Job description (Occupation)	.091	1.610	.108
Highest level of education completed	.077	1.503	.134
Are you married with children?	-.257	-3.999	.000
Number of children	.513	8.211	.000

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The equation derived revealed the level at which each of the factors affect or influence domestic violence in Ibadan Metropolis.

$$DV = -5.0L + 6.1A + 1.3G + 1.0M + 2.1E + 2.8R - 4.4I + 1.6J + 1.5Ed - 4.0mC + 8.2nC.$$

Discussion

Findings from the study revealed that religion was opined to be a mechanism used against women; In fact, Religion was seen as a pro-women-oppression Institution judging by the pooled responses of more than 67% of the respondents. Findings from the qualitative excerpts reports that women mostly go through violence often times because they are been asked to forgive their partners and are been admonished by their religious doctrines of not going for divorce. This implies that religion is a strong determinant for an individual because it is key for dispute resolution between husband and wife in our society. This is in line with other researchers whose views supported the findings of this research thus; “religion and spirituality can serve either as mechanisms for achieving resilience in the face of domestic assault or as contributors to women’s vulnerability”.

Also, only a few (6.0%) of the respondents believe that the religious leaders do not play a role in helping victims of violence. However, from the study shows that Ibadan North West recorded the highest (66.8%) while in Ibadan North LGA had the lowest regarding if domestic violence is unhealthy or unhealthy. Results also shows that religion has a positive influence on domestic violence ($p < 0.05$). On the contrary, one of the KII participants opined that religious leaders help preach against domestic violence but that members misinterpret the doctrines. Furthermore, that women are encouraged to report cases of violence to their religious leaders but in most cases are limited due to

what the society would say against the wife or women try to avoid been chastised by other family members. Also, from the study shows that most common forms of violence are physical beating and verbal abuse. While, the qualitative highlight from one of the participants points that, women in the community mostly suffer beating from men and are been called all sorts of names while some men do not provide for both wife and children as reported by a female in Ibadan North LGA.

Relationship between religion and domestic violence

Findings from the study revealed that religion was opined to be a mechanism used against women; In fact, Religion was seen as a pro-women-oppression Institution judging by the pooled responses of more than 67% of the respondents. Findings from the qualitative excerpts reports that women mostly go through violence often times because they are been asked to forgive their partners and are been admonished by their religious doctrines of not going for divorce. This implies that religion is a strong determinant for an individual because it is key for dispute resolution between husband and wife in our society. This is in line with other researchers whose views supported the findings of Sapp, L. (2023) who investigated Forgiveness as a Moderator of the Relationship between Religiosity and Intimate Partner Violence stating that forgiveness further amplifies domestic violence. Forgiveness continuously moderates positive relationship between both partners and yet violence persists. More so, religion encourage women or men to forgive and forget a repeatedly toxically abusive and violent intimate partners. Similarly, a converted partner will experience more domestic violence than a partner who decides to jointly worship in the same religion as the spouse according to Fahmi, R., Fahmi, D. M., Aswirna, P. and Fahmi, F. A. (2023). For instance, if a woman or man is a non-Muslim and decides to marry a man or woman who is a Muslim there is high tendency for domestic violence to occur.

Perceptions of religious leaders on domestic violence

From the study, findings shows that only a few (6.0%) of the respondents believe that the religious leaders do not play a role in helping victims of violence. However, from the study shows that Ibadan North West recorded the highest (66.8%) while in Ibadan North LGA had the lowest regarding if domestic violence is unhealthy or unhealthy. Results also shows that religion has a positive influence on domestic violence ($p < 0.05$). On the contrary, one of the KII participants opined that religious leaders help preach against domestic violence but that members misinterpret the doctrines. Furthermore, that women are encouraged to report cases of violence to their religious leaders but in most cases are limited due to what the society would say against the wife or wanting to avoid been chastised by other family members.

Also, from the study shows that most common forms of violence are physical beating and verbal abuse. While, qualitative excerpts from one of the participants points that, women in the community mostly suffer beating from

men and are been called all sorts of names while some men do not provide for both wife and children as reported by a female in Ibadan North LGA. Prevalence of gender based violence within religious community include; rape and sexual assaults as found by Efuntade O. A. (2023) with members and religious leaders as perpetrators of violence. Also, from the study, it shows that, most religious leaders do not emphasize the importance of morals rather they concentrate more on their own financial gains. So, often times, it is believed that, they find it difficult to speak the truth in cases of violence. The response of a church leader can increase the risk to a victim, mainly if a church leader prioritizes forgiveness for an abuser before safety for a victim.

Role of religion on domestic violence

Findings from the study shows that majority (94.6%) of the respondents opined that religion is an integral component in our society and believes its role as an institution is critical on issue of domestic violence. This corroborates the findings of Muthangya, A. N., Joshua, S. M., Chidongo, T. M. & Wokabi, F. G. (2023) analysed the textual usages of the bible and how harmful it is to women in Kenya, the way biblical texts are misinterpreted and interpreted may either promote or justify violence against women. Biblical texts been used by pastors to justify the abuser and to provide counselling for the victim further sustains GBV. There is need for proper understanding of bible texts by reading and relearning the bible so that it is used appropriately in the right context and manner. Religion promotes patriarchy as bible text connotes wives submit yourselves to your husband as to the Lord. Similarly, the same biblical text referenced thus, for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church.

Furthermore, Princewill (2023) study affirms that, Christian religion supports that, women are totally submissive to the man and there are other cultures like the Ikwerres that supports patriarchal family culture not excluding African nations like Nigeria. More so, as the church submits to Christ, so also the wife must submit to her husband in all things. This portrays the patriarchy and male dominance. Religious leaders use these religious texts to describe why they remain in or return to relationships that involve domestic violence, citing the undesirability of divorce, the need to love and honour husbands, and the power of forgiveness and prayer to generate change in the abuser. Additionally, Crane (2023) examined the effects of religion on Christian women decision making and thus revealed that, women suffer in silence and end up with mental health issues such as depression and anxiety symptoms while for some they battle with substance abuse.

Factors influencing domestic violence

Findings shows that factors such as Lack of communication; Number of children in the family; use of drugs/alcohol as well as unemployment. This was

significantly different ($p < 0.05$) among the five Local Government Areas. The result of the first hypothesis revealed that there was significant correlation between religion and domestic violence ($p < 0.05$). The dependent relationship between religion and domestic violence was significant at ($p < 0.05$). Findings support Nwokocha (2023) reported that, there are negative implications associated with religion and culture on domestic violence based on the analysis of Osinachi Nwachukwu's death. Implications such as causing disintegration among families and destroying foundations upon which some families were built.

Particularly, it is how different religious interpretations have separated partners and resulting into violence and cultural preference for the male child which places the male child to be superior over the girl child and thus makes it difficult for women to exercise control over their male counterpart. Emphasis on culture is predominant with other risk factors such as substance abuse, lack of punishments for offenders, indecent dressing styles, social media, COVID-19 lockdown and male dominance (Idowu, Israel, Obisesan, Ogunmodede, Babayeju, Abogunloko & Bayo-Philip. 2023) which accounted for 12.4% of the entire sampled respondents which may be applied to the population. In other words, if the roles of Religion are improved, the level of occurrence of domestic violence in Ibadan Metropolis may reduce.

The perception of religious leaders on domestic violence was significantly and positively correlated ($p < 0.05$) with the prevalence of domestic violence in Ibadan Metropolis. Regrettably, these suggestions and admonitions are rather peculiar in their stereotypical design and makeup and appear radicalized to some extent. For instance, who was capable of withstanding and contending with abuse by an intimate partner thus, suggests a more positive and proactive religious role may reduce the incidence of intimate partners' domestic violence. Exposure to Violence correlates with the importance people attach to God where victims use God as a coping strategy to continuously deal with a violent partner (Tuki, 2023). The following variables and demographic factors had significant influence on domestic violence in Ibadan metropolis (LGA, age, gender, marital status, religion, job description and age at first marriage.

Apart from the Local government, marital status, income level, Job description, age at marriage, the other factors had positive effect on domestic violence in Ibadan metropolis. Findings support Okedare, Salawu & Fawole (2023) opined that parental characteristics such as marital status is significantly associated with experiences of domestic violence while employment status increases experience of sexual violence. For example, during covid-19, cases of domestic violence increased because of the lockdown measure put in place thus, both partners had no choice rather than to stay at home and enjoy their spouse although, reverse was the case for some people with previous findings from Idowu, Israel, Obisesan, Ogunmodede, Babayeju, Abogunloko & Bayo-Philip (2023) asserts that, past scenarios of GBV are as a result of marital status, religion and attitude. Thus, there is need for cultural transformation across local communities in Nigeria. Similarly, findings of Obiagu (2023)

indicates that, employment status and level of education influences domestic violence. For instance, a woman who is employed and earns more than the husband or she is more educated than the husband will likely result to violence. Thus, women who are not educated or economically empowered will continue to expand the gender inequality gap. As supported by Firdaush & Das (2023) findings revealed that, educated couples and women who have decision-making power are less likely not to experience high level of DV. Although, there are women who tend to accept violence from their partners alongside marital control (Firdaush & Das, 2023).

Factors affecting the role of religion on domestic violence

Findings from the study shows that majority (94.6%) of the respondents opined that religion is an integral component in our society and believes its role as an institution is critical on issue of domestic violence. However, most religious leaders try to protect the image of the church neglecting the effects of such violence on the victim like Efuntade (2023) posits that, most members and religious leaders will not want to report cases of violence due to shame, fear and stigma of what people would say or do. Such women use religious language to describe why they remain in or return to relationships that involve domestic violence, citing the undesirability of divorce, the need to love and honour husbands, and the power of forgiveness and prayer to generate change in the abuser.

Findings shows that factors such as Lack of communication; Number of children in the family; use of drugs/alcohol as well as unemployment influences domestic violence and significantly different ($p < 0.05$) across the five Local Government Areas. The result of the first hypothesis revealed that there was significant correlation between religion and domestic violence ($p < 0.05$). The dependent relationship between religion and domestic violence was significant. This implies that the prevalence of domestic violence was significantly caused or influenced by the role of religion.

Although, cultural preference places the male child to be superior over the girl child and thus makes it difficult for women to exercise control over their male counterpart which supports findings of Obidile, Ndep, Akwafuo, Ekwebene, Azubike, Obidile-Ikwegbu & Igbudu (2023) opined that, men like to exercise full control and acts as sole decision makers. This however accounts for 12.4% of the entire sampled respondents which may be applied to the population. In other words, if the roles of Religion are improved, the level of occurrence of domestic violence may reduce. The two variables are positively correlated. They may be concluded to think that a more positive and proactive religious role may reduce the incidence of intimate partners' domestic violence. The following variables and demographic factors had significant influence on domestic violence in Ibadan metropolis (LGA, Age, Gender, Marital Status, Religion, Job description and Age at first marriage. Apart from the Local government, marital status, income level, Job description, age at marriage, the other factors had positive effect on domestic violence in Ibadan metropolis.

Accordingly, findings of Chukwueme (2023) highlights educational level, ethnicity, residence, and region influences domestic violence.

Conclusion

From the study, it was clear that majority of women do not believe they go through any form of violence from their spouse while women strongly believe that religious leaders are major stakeholders in addressing cases of violence, in most cases, they encourage women to endure and forgive owing to the biblical doctrine of “Women been submissive and forgiving”. More so, that the man is the head of the house puts women at a disadvantaged position especially in an African society like Nigeria that is highly patriarchal.

From the study, it was revealed that, women and men experience domestic violence. However, women experience higher level of violence in form of physical beating, emotional violence, sexual violence, and verbal violence in the community. Some women, go through emotional trauma during sexual intercourse because some men have their wife go through certain rituals or use their tongue on certain objects before having sexual intercourse with them and in some instances may lead to death of the woman. Results also revealed that, some men perceive wife beating as a corrective measure that must be initiated if the woman misbehaves. Although, from the study, the qualitative findings show that, religious doctrines influence domestic violence. For instance, that a women must be in total submission to her husband and must follow his directives puts some women under strict laws made by their spouse. In some cases, it is an abomination for a woman to report her husband to family members or neighbour when she is being maltreated, this is because women are seen as minor who are often neglected in the society coupled with other cultural practices that puts women on the edge.

Particularly, is that religious leaders do not want to interfere with certain issues that may pertain to husband and wife because they are been careful of what may happen and what the society may say about them. Lastly, domestic violence is now been seen as a social norm which is on the increase in developing countries like Nigeria and the prevalence of various perceptions about domestic violence have implications for women development and the society at large. It is very important, that relevant stakeholders such as government, non-governmental organizations, community leaders and several women groups must see the need to educate and give priority in addressing socio-cultural and religious norms that supports domestic violence.

Theoretical implications

The use of feminist theory is primarily focused on cultural, structural and societal factors that supports domestic violence. However, this theory has its

own limitations of not taken into consideration the individual factors such as poverty, socio-economic status, traumatic event, mental health issues, substance abuse and other personality traits that the abuser may possess. From the study, it was revealed that, anger is another character that result to violence. Findings from this study highlights the role of culture and societal factors, such as age of women, their level of education, marital status, employment status, and social norms.

All these factors contribute heavily to the prevalence of domestic violence. Particularly, is the fight for equality for women and men by liberal feminist, literatures have established the fact that man are the major perpetrators of violence and abusers and this study equally supports established literature from the interviews and experiences shared by victims of violence. Feminism is strongly against patriarchy, where male dominance and male headship is greatly supported by cultural-religious norms and traditions which continually encourage the way and manner men treats women. Perceptions of religious leaders and the society is strongly rooted in religious doctrines and cultural interpretations over the superiority of men over women. Thus, this has implications for behavioural change which is in accordance with the study of Turhan, Z. (2023) investigated the role of religion and faith on behavioural change among perpetrators of domestic violence. Religion is complex and dynamic with different belief systems that may continually impact on perpetrator's attitudes and practices. Hence, the distinction is between justification of violence by men and the privilege religion give to men.

Practical implications

It is to note that issues on religion is mostly debated and controversial when been discussed not to talk more of domestic violence across many cultural settings. Particularly, religion and religious leaders are at the core of sensitive issues like domestic violence as reported by many victims not excluding parental and cultural influences in our society in which these factors are very critical and most be taken into consideration in addressing issue of violence across the globe. Religious leaders are very important in providing guidance and knowledge for its members.

Daily conversations should involve educating people as part of everyday life by religious leaders on domestic violence. Particularly, that education is key in shaping the minds and beliefs and that religious leaders must involve themselves in the community to fight against domestic violence. Moreover, not all religious leaders may be willing to address issue of domestic violence neither do they desire to seek knowledge on domestic violence.

This study shows that even though some faith leaders are not willing to engage in furthering their knowledge on domestic violence it is still affecting many members of their congregations. Traditions are at the core of religious institutions but if the members of the congregation require or challenge their leaders to be more educated on salient issues confronting the community, change will be inevitable. Domestic violence needs to be reduced while

ensuring the secrecy and silence about it is put to an end. The fight against domestic violence requires the support of religious institutions globally to end this menace.

Recommendations

- This study therefore concludes that religion and religious leaders coupled with parental, socio-cultural and religious norms influences domestic violence in Ibadan metropolis. Thus, this study recommends that, actionable steps must be taken which must involve the educational, health, civil and the religious sectors in the society that will provide the needed structure in empowering women and the needed support that would enable victims to report cases of domestic violence appropriately.
- The Government needs to come up with a law that works against religious and social-cultural norms that support domestic violence in all areas. Although, there is need for proper sensitization and education for both men and women including community members to fight against certain cultural practices that supports violence against men and women. Appropriate laws must be in place to curb perpetrators of domestic violence.
- Religious leaders must ensure that certain stereotypes about male headship are eradicated, these stereotypes further promote patriarchy and if not abolished will continue to give men absolute power over women and the likelihood of an increase in domestic violence.
- Religious leaders must embark on awareness creation and education about the negative effects of domestic violence on the development of the society at large and future generations.
- Religious leaders should seek ways through which women can also be empowered especially women are vulnerable across communities with vital information about domestic violence. Also, religious leaders can help bridge the divide between men and women in ensuring women are economically empowered via financial assistance to support their businesses.
- Religion is an institution and its role in ensuring unity and stability at all levels must be felt, women can be empowered through skill acquisition programmes through which they can stand on their own and fight for their course or anything that may pose threat or death to their health.
- Religious leaders must communicate behavioural change through counselling that is done for couples before and after marriage in helping young adults including married ones to help unlearn certain religious norms/values and social-cultural norm that supports domestic violence and how they can cope with each other.

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