Gender-Based Violence in Nigeria: A Cross-Sectional Study of the Magnitude, Likely Risk Factors and Attitudes Towards Intimate Partner Violence Against Women

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***Abstract*—Globally, a common manifestation of Gender-Based abuse is Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) against women. IPV is a serious public health problem that comes with a debilitating toll on women, their families and the immediate environment in which they reside. Research, mostly conducted in developed countries, has identified some likely factors responsible for violence and has also explored attitudes that could be supportive of abuse. However, developing countries around the world, especially those in Africa, are still far behind in making tangible impact on exploring these issues. Considering this paucity of information and with the aim of contributing to the IPV knowledge base in the developing world, a cross-sectional population-based survey involving 719 Nigerian women (aged 18 years and above, currently or previously in cohabiting or non-cohabiting relationships) was conducted using a detailed pretested questionnaire to solicit data on demographics, socioeconomic, attitudinal and behavioral characteristics, as well as those pertaining to experiences of IPV. On performing relevant descriptive statistical analyses on the data collected, the results show that life-time and current prevalence of IPV are 25.5% and 16.7%, respectively. There is also an indication that women across urban and rural areas have a relatively high level of acceptance towards IPV (wife-beating). Results from logistic regression analysis to identify the predictors of violence show that factors such as women's and partners' educational attainments, partnership age and educational disparities, partnership discord, among others, are predictive of violence.**

***Keywords*—Domestic Violence, Women, Prevalence, Risk Factors, Attitudes**

I. Introduction

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), a form of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), is a serious issue that is endemic in virtually all societies in the world, cutting across social class, race, age and religious affiliations [1]. Although it is a problem that affects both men and women, overwhelming majority of victims are women [2,3]. Nonetheless, issues surrounding 'IPV against women' are not only women's issues as the name connotes, they are also pertinent to standard of general public health, attainment of human rights, and they are issues predisposing societies to poverty as well as stifling economic growth and development [3-5]. IPV occurs in intimate relationships and affects about one in every three women across the globe [6]. But in developing countries, especially in Africa where societies are already ravaged by a host of social and health issues, IPV imposes an additional burden, with research showing prevalence of IPV against women that is as high as 80% [7]. In addition to being a social concern in its own right, IPV also predisposes people to a range of adverse health outcomes, including infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Syphilis, and dangerous life-style choices such as substance abuse [3,8].

Studies have explored some of the likely factors responsible for IPV occurrence, and results have consistently shown that demographic factors such as age, education, socioeconomic status, among others, are inversely associated with IPV [9-11]. Findings from behavioral and socio-cultural studies show significant associations with incidence of IPV, particularly in traditional environments where there are weak community sanctions and low proportions of female literacy [6,12-14].

Studies carried out in developed countries have underscored the emergence of IPV as strongly related to socioeconomic factors, and also shown the links between IPV and adverse health outcomes as well as economic costs. However, the same cannot be said of developing countries such as in Africa. Legislative support to bring about the desired protection for women, in particular, is either lacking or poorly developed [15,16].

WHO [3] cautioned that predictors of IPV vary among countries; as such it may be erroneous and inexpedient for developing countries to transfer ideas directly from developed ones. Guidelines for policies and decisions should be country-specific. It can be justified therefore that, elaborate research is needed urgently in the developing world to address these issues.

The purpose of this paper is to study the magnitude of IPV against women in a developing country (Nigeria) and explore the attitude of women towards abuse. The paper also aims to identify and discuss specific socio-behavioral factors which can predict incidents of IPV in a developing environment such as the country in question.

II. METHODS

A. Study Design

To achieve the purpose of this study, a cross-sectional population-based household survey involving 719 women was carried out in Kwara State. The critical inclusion criterion was: women aged 18 years and above who were previously or currently involved in a cohabiting or non-cohabiting relationship. A multistage sampling procedure which reflected the rural and urban locations of the respondents was adopted. First, randomly selected Wards were identified; then Enumerated Areas of smaller clusters of people and thirdly households where only one eligible woman per household, were identified by a systematic random sampling method.

The selected study area – Kwara State – is one of the 36 member States constituting Nigeria. It is located in the middle-belt geo-political region and serves as gateway between the northern and southern parts of Nigeria. The socio-demographic profile of the State is diverse in ethnicity, socioeconomic and sociocultural practices, thereby making it suitable for the study.

B. Questionnaire and Data Collection

Eight primary sections were created for the questionnaire. Closed structured questions were pretested and used in the training of selected data collectors and research assistants. Data on respondents' socio-demographic identity, general health status, including reproductive status, were obtained through voluntary opinion. Specific data on current and past dates or sexual partners were included. Attitudes towards gender roles and violence, partners' controlling behavior, experiences and consequences of violence in the relationship were central to the questions. The design of the questionnaire drew on the experience of recent work by the WHO–Multi-country Study on domestic violence against women [8] and ICRW– Study on the cost of domestic violence [17].

To capture the experience of IPV, behavior-specific questions pertaining to the different forms of IPV (i.e., physical, sexual and psychological) were used and responses to the questions were coded on a binary scale (i.e., Yes or No). Table I contains a sample of these questions. The choice of the questions and approach is to encourage better disclosure of violence experience and facilitate reasonable comparison with other studies. Ultimately, this choice was made to help draw meaningful conclusions from the research results.

To estimate the prevalence and document attitudes towards IPV as well as determine which risk factors are predictive of experience of violence, a statistical software package (IBM SPSS Statistics 20) was used to explore the data generated. Strict adherence to the standard ethical guidelines designed by the WHO for Research on Domestic Violence against girls, children and women [1] were upheld throughout the study. Approval for the study was sought and obtained from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Kwara State.

TABLE I. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPT OF IPV USING BEHAVIOR-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS (ADAPTED FROM [8])

Form of violence	Behavior-specific question
Physical	Has he or any other partner ever: Slapped you or thrown something at you that could hurt you?
	Pushed you or shoved you?
	Hit you with his fist or with something else that could hurt you?
	Kicked, dragged or beaten you up?
	Chocked or burnt you on purpose?
	Threatened to use or actually used a gun, knife or other weapon against you?
Sexual	Has he or any other partner ever physically forced you to have sexual intercourse when you did not want to?
	Did you ever have sexual intercourse that was not physically forced on you, but because you were afraid of what he might do?
	Did he ever force you to perform a sex act that you found degrading or humiliating?
	Did he ever deny you from any sexual activity when you particularly wanted it?
Psychological	Has he or any other partner ever: Insulted you or made you feel bad about yourself?
	Belittled or humiliated you in front of other people?
	Did things to scare or intimidate you on purpose (e.g. by the way he looked at you, by yelling or smashing things)?
	Threatened to hurt you or someone you care about?

III. DATA ANALYSIS

IBM SPSS statistical software was used to automatically estimate the magnitude – life-time and current prevalence – of any form of IPV (i.e., physical, psychological and/or sexual violence), and also for each of the specific forms of IPV covered in the study. The process involved in the calculation is the division of the number of women reporting victimization by those in the sample. The descriptive analysis also generated frequency tables to examine how socio-demographic factors –

age, area of residence, educational attainment, literacy, employment status – affect the observed prevalence of IPV. In other words, it explores the distribution of IPV occurrence with the different socio-demographic factors.

To explore women's attitudes towards IPV (specifically, their degree of acceptance of wife-beating), descriptive statistics were also used to assess the respondents' opinions on the following questions that were solicited as part of the survey: "In your opinion, does a man have a good reason to hit his wife if: (a) she does not complete her household work to his satisfaction, (b) she disobeys him, (c) she refuses to have sexual relations with him, (d) she asks him whether he has other girlfriends, (e) he suspects that she is unfaithful and (f) he finds out that she has been unfaithful."

In addition to facilitating the exploration of attitudes towards gender roles in Nigeria, this set of questions was chosen to make the results of this study comparable to those of others as these questions and very similar ones are widely used for such assessments (See [8,14,18,19]).

In the analysis process of this study, a binary variable amenable to simple descriptive statistics was created from the questions – with one of the categories of the variable signifying acceptance of wife-beating (in cases where respondents agreed with at least one of the instances above that justified wife-beating), while the other category signifies non-acceptance of wife-beating (in cases where respondents did not agree with any of the instances, or stated that they do not have a particular opinion). Moreover, the rationale behind forming the non-acceptance of wife-beating category by grouping respondents that did not agree with any of the instances and those who stated that they do not have a particular opinion is mainly to ensure comparability of results with those of other studies. The variations in acceptance/ non-acceptance of wife-beating with demographic variables were also catalogued using a frequency table and inferentially explored via Chi-square test.

For the risk factors analysis aspect of the study, simple bivariate logistic regression was first performed to study the crude association between each of the independent variables and the occurrence of IPV. The independent variables explored include: woman's characteristics (age, literacy, educational attainment, employment, partnership status, categorical number of children, rural/urban residence, and frequency of communication with her family), partner's characteristics (age, literacy, educational attainment, employment, general history of physical aggression, affairs with other women, alcohol use, history of drug use and controlling behaviors), as well as relationship characteristics (age difference, employment and educational disparity, payment of dowry/bride price, discord and choice of partner). After inspection of the simple regression analysis results, potential variables for the multivariable analysis were selected using a significance criterion of $p<0.05$. Drawing on the experience of relevant literature, in addition to the selected variables, some other independent variables were also selected for inclusion in the multivariable analysis based on prior knowledge of them being major contributors towards IPV.

Sequential logistic regression was used in the multivariable analysis to find the best fitting, most parsimonious and biologically reasonable models to describe the association between the sets of individual- and relationship-level variables and the occurrence of IPV. As the name implies, the analysis was executed in stages. The first stage included all the variables that were statistically significant in the simple logistic regression, followed, in subsequent stages, by each of the other variables considered to have significant importance based on relevant literature (i.e., variables persistently identified by relevant literature to be associated with IPV, but were found not to be statistically significant in the simple logistic regression analysis of this study). To decide which variables to include in the final best fitting models, the extent to which each variable associates with IPV or attenuates the association of other variables in the models was examined via Wald test ($p<0.05$), with the direction as well as degree of association expressed in the form of adjusted odds ratio and 95% confidence interval. Statistical significance of the final models was further assessed using omnibus chi-square test as well as Hosmer and Lemeshow test, with $p<0.05$ and $p>0.05$, respectively, indicating good fit.

IV. Results

A. Prevalence

Characteristics of women and prevalence of IPV are given in Table II. In this presentation of results, any statement of life-time or current prevalence of IPV implies the prevalence of any form of life-time or current violence, unless otherwise stated to mean just a specific form of violence in particular (e.g., physical abuse).

The results show that the life-time and current prevalence of IPV are 25.5% and 16.7%, respectively, with psychological abuse being the dominant form of IPV (24.3% of women suffered this form of violence over a life-time), followed closely by physical aggression (with a life-time prevalence of 18.6%). The descriptive results also show that there is not much difference in the prevalence of IPV between the Urban and Rural areas. With regard to age, women within the age category of 50 years and above show higher exposure to IPV (having a life-time prevalence of about 30.9%), and when the partner's age group is considered, women whose partners are between the ages of 30 – 49 show the highest level of IPV (a life-time prevalence of 27.4%). Nonetheless, when the current exposure to IPV is considered, the descriptive statistics show that women within the age group of 30 – 49 consistently have the highest exposure to the different forms of IPV, only with the exception of sexual violence where women in the age group of 50 years and above are slightly more victimized (7.3% as compared with 7.2% in the 30 – 49 age group).

In terms of partnership age difference, women who are 1 – 4 years younger than their partners show higher level of IPV victimization – with a lifetime prevalence of approximately 29%. When compared with women having higher educational attainment, those with lower or no attainment at all show greater prevalence of IPV (those with primary or no attainment at all having a life-time prevalence of 48.9% and 43.0%, respectively). They also show similarly higher levels for current prevalence (42.2% and 35.5%). Just as in the case of the women, the results pertaining to partner's attainment indicate low cases of IPV victimization amongst women with partners having

higher educational attainments (life-time prevalence of 19.8% amongst those whose partners have tertiary/higher educational attainments, as compared with 34.7% amongst those having partners with primary or no attainments at all). When partnership educational difference is considered, the results show that relationships with educational disparities tend to be fraught with cases of IPV. Situations where women are better educated (i.e., have more educational attainment than their partners) as well as those where male partners are, respectively, indicate life-time IPV prevalence levels of about 26% and 33%. The results also show that male partners having 4 or more controlling behaviors tend to be greater perpetrators of IPV – displaying a life-time prevalence that is as high as 46.8%. The results also show that intimate partners who are physically, psychologically or sexually violent tend to have a history of drug use (substance abuse). Women with partners who use drugs every day or a couple of times in a month have a life-time IPV prevalence that ranges from 81.5% - 90%, and are highly predisposed to experiencing all the forms of IPV. Women who reported often occurrence of discord (i.e., couples quarreling) in their relationships show remarkably higher experience of all the different forms of IPV (with a life-time experience of IPV that is as high as 61.7% and a current prevalence of 47.3%). With regard to choice of spouse, results show that women who had a say in the choice of their spouse are less likely to be victims of IPV as compared with those who had no say whatsoever. Women who had no say at all in the selection of their spouses/partners show a life-time prevalence of approximately 70% and a current prevalence of about 62%, while those who although had their partners chosen for them but consented to the choice have a life-time and current prevalence of approximately 20% and 11%, respectively.

TABLE II. PREVALENCE OF PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, SEXUAL AND ANY FORM OF VIOLENCE (PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND/ OR SEXUAL) BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WOMEN

	Physical violence		**Psychological violence**		**Sexual violence**		**Any form of violence**		**Total no. of women**
Variable	*Life-time (%)*	*Current (%)*	*Life-time (%)*	*Current (%)*	*Life-time (%)*	*Current (%)*	*Life-time (%)*	*Current (%)*	*(n)*
Area									
Rural	18.8	13.9	23.4	16.8	10.7	5.5	24.6	16.8	346
Urban	18.5	11.5	25.2	16.4	12.1	6.7	26.3	16.6	373
Woman's educational attainment									
Tertiary/ Higher	9.1	4.0	14.8	6.4	6.7	1.7	16.8	6.7	297
Secondary	16.4	10.2	22.3	14.8	12.1	5.9	23.0	14.8	256
None or Primary	39.2	31.9	44.6	37.4	18.7	14.5	44.6	37.4	166
Woman's age									
18 – 29	15.3	8.4	24.5	11.2	12.0	4.0	27.3	11.6	249
30 – 49	20.2	15.2	23.4	19.5	10.6	7.2	23.6	19.5	415
50 and above	21.8	12.7	30.9	18.2	14.5	7.3	30.9	18.2	55
Partner's educational attainment									
Tertiary/ Higher	11.0	6.1	18.2	10.1	8.5	3.4	19.8	10.3	445
Secondary	29.4	19.6	34.0	24.2	15.0	6.5	34.6	24.2	153
None or Primary	33.1	28.1	34.7	30.6	17.4	15.7	34.7	30.6	121
Partner's age group									
18 – 29	11.1	4.2	18.8	6.9	12.5	2.1	22.9	6.9	144
30 – 49	21.9	16.7	27.1	20.5	9.6	6.8	27.4	20.8	365
50 and above	18.1	11.4	23.3	16.2	13.8	7.6	23.8	16.2	210
Partner's controlling behavior									
None	3.5	0.9	3.5	1.8	0.0	0.0	3.5	1.8	113
One	7.3	3.6	10.0	8.2	2.7	0.9	11.8	8.2	110
Two or Three	15.5	11.2	22.3	15.1	8.3	4.7	23.0	15.5	278
Four or more	36.2	25.2	45.0	30.3	25.7	13.8	46.8	30.3	218
Partner's history of drug use (substance abuse)									
Never	12.8	7.3	18.1	10.4	8.5	3.4	19.3	10.5	626
1 – 4 times a month	80.0	60.0	90.0	80.0	40.0	30.0	90.0	80.0	10

Every day	74.1	55.6	81.5	63.0	37.0	25.9	81.5	63.0	27
Respondent does not know	46.4	42.9	55.4	51.8	26.8	23.2	55.4	51.8	56
Partnership age difference									
Woman is same age as partner	21.7	17.4	26.1	17.4	13.0	4.3	26.1	17.4	23
Woman is older	15.4	15.4	15.4	15.4	15.4	7.7	15.4	15.4	13
Woman is 1 – 4 years younger	21.8	13.1	27.3	16.7	9.5	4.7	28.7	16.7	275
Woman is 5 – 9 years younger	18.2	13.3	24.4	18.7	14.7	7.6	26.2	19.1	225
Woman is 10 or more years younger	14.2	10.4	20.2	13.7	9.8	6.6	20.2	13.7	183
Partnership educational difference									
Same level	15.3	9.7	20.0	11.9	9.4	4.5	21.6	12.1	445
Partner better educated	24.1	18.0	32.5	24.6	14.0	8.3	32.9	24.6	228
Woman better educated	23.9	15.2	26.1	21.7	17.4	10.9	26.1	21.7	46
Partnership discord									
Never	1.8	1.8	3.5	2.7	1.8	0.9	4.4	2.7	113
Rarely	11.2	5.7	15.7	8.4	6.6	1.6	17.1	8.7	439
Often/ sometimes	49.7	38.3	61.1	47.3	30.5	21.6	61.7	47.3	167
Choice of spouse or partner									
Both chose	17.2	11.1	22.4	14.9	10.7	5.3	23.8	15.0	606
Respondent chose	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	20
Others chose with woman's consent	10.7	7.1	19.6	10.7	8.9	3.6	19.6	10.7	56
Others chose without woman's consent	64.9	54.1	70.3	62.2	32.4	27.0	70.3	62.2	56
Total	18.6	12.7	24.3	16.6	11.4	6.1	25.5	16.7	719

B. Women's Attitudes Towards Intimate Partner Violence

The distribution of attitudes of women towards IPV in terms of their acceptance of wife-beating in the study sample is given in Table III. The descriptive results presented in the table show that 33.5% of women agreed with the acceptability of wife-beating for at least one of the reasons stated earlier in the methods section of this paper. Support for wife-beating was slightly higher in the urban area than the rural area, with women in both areas showing acceptance levels of 35.4% and 31.5% respectively. In terms of educational attainment, women with primary or no attainment and those with secondary education tend to be more supportive of wife-beating (33.7% and 41.8%, respectively) as compared with those having higher educational attainment (26.3%). As regards age group of women, those in the age bracket of 18 – 29 years show the least acceptance of wife-beating (24.1%), while those in the age group of 30 – 49 years show the highest level of acceptance (38.6%). Considering women's literacy, those that are literate tend to show greater acceptance of wife-beating (35.4%) in comparison with those that are not literate (24.8%). The inferential statistical analysis (Chi-square) results indicate that woman's educational attainment, age and literacy are all significantly related to her acceptance of wife-beating ($p<0.05$). Nevertheless, the results also show that there is no significant difference in the proportion of rural dwelling women that accept wife-beating and those that are urban residents ($p>0.05$).

TABLE III. TABLE SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS IPV (WIFE-BEATING)

Variable	Women's Acceptance of Wife-beating: *Non-acceptance (%)*	Women's Acceptance of Wife-beating: *Acceptance (%)*	Total no. of women *(n)*	Test Statistic
Area				χ^2 (1, n = 719) = 1.05, p = 0.306
Rural	68.5	31.5	346	
Urban	64.6	35.4	373	
Woman's educational attainment				χ^2 (2, n = 719) = 14.89, p = 0.001
Tertiary/ Higher	73.7	26.3	297	
Secondary	58.2	41.8	256	
None or Primary	66.3	33.7	166	
Woman's age				χ^2 (2, n = 719) = 15.18, p = 0.001
18 – 29	75.9	24.1	249	
30 – 49	61.4	38.6	415	
50 and above	61.8	38.2	55	
Woman literate				χ^2 (1, n = 719) = 4.70, p = 0.030
No	75.2	24.8	125	
Yes	64.6	35.4	594	
Total	66.5	33.5	719	

C. Simple Logistic Regression Analysis

Table IV presents the results of the series of simple bivariate logistic regression analyses. The results show that there are significant associations (p<0.05) between IPV and variables such as woman literacy, partner literacy, educational attainment of woman and that of her partner, partner's history of physical aggression, partner engaged in affairs with other women, partner's use of alcohol, partner's history of drug use, partner's controlling behavior, woman's frequency of communication with family, partnership educational difference, partnership discord and choice of spouse or partner.

Women that are not literate were found to be approximately 2.7 times more predisposed to experiencing IPV as compared with those that are literate (p<0.001). In a similar vein, women whose partners are not literate are also approximately 1.8 times more likely to experience IPV (p=0.008). In terms of educational attainment, women with primary or no attainment are approximately 4 times more likely to experience IPV as compared with those having higher educational attainment (p<0.001). Nonetheless, there is no significant difference between women with higher education and those with secondary. Regarding partner's educational attainment, women whose partners have primary or no attainment and those with secondary education are approximately 2 times more likely to experience IPV as compared with those whose partners have higher attainment (p<0.001 and p=0.001, respectively). Moreover, women whose partners have general history of physical aggression (i.e., have been involved in a physical fight with another man) are 3.5 times more likely to experience IPV than those whose partners have no such history (p<0.001). Women reporting that their partners have or may have engaged in affairs with other women are more likely to experience IPV (1.8- and 3.6-fold increase in likelihood, respectively). Besides, women who reported that they are unaware of such affairs were also found to be approximately 2.5 times more predisposed to experiencing IPV as compared with those reporting non-existence of such affairs. As regards partner's use of alcohol, women whose partners consume alcohol everyday and those with a once a week rate are more likely to experience IPV when compared with those who reported their partners' abstinence from alcohol (approximately a 2.8- and 2.4-fold increase in likelihood, respectively). In terms of partner's history of drug use, women who reported that their partners use such substance one to four times a month and those that reported everyday usage are more likely to experience IPV when compared with those that reported no such usage (approximately 37.6- and 18.4-fold increase in likelihood, respectively). Nonetheless, women who reported that they are not aware of such substance abuse are also approximately 5 times more predisposed to experiencing IPV as compared with those women who categorically reported that their partners have never used such substance. Regarding controlling behavior of partner (e.g., partner tries to prevent woman from seeing friends, restricts her contact with her family and gets angry if she speaks with another man), the results show that women whose partners have one or more controlling behavior are more prone to IPV as compared with those having partners without such behavior. The magnitude of likelihood of experiencing IPV increases as the number of controlling behavior increases. Those having partners showing one controlling behavior are approximately 4 times more likely to experience IPV, while those with partners showing two or three and four or more are approximately 8 and 24 times more likely to experience IPV, respectively. As regards woman's frequency of communication with family, women who correspond at least once a month are approximately 2 times more likely to

experience IPV when compared with those who correspond at least once a week (p=0.012). Besides, those who correspond once a year or hardly ever are even more likely to experience IPV (approximately 3 times more likely) when compared with those who correspond at least once a week (p<0.001).

In terms of partnership educational disparity, women in partnerships where their male partners are more educated than themselves are approximately 2 times more likely to experience IPV as compared with women in partnerships where the couples have same level of education (p=0.002). Nonetheless, there is no significant difference in the exposure to IPV amongst women in partnerships where they are more educated than their partners and where they have same level of education. Regarding partnership discord, women reporting some form of quarreling with their partners are more predisposed to experiencing IPV as compared with those reporting no quarreling. Women with rare occurrence of quarreling are approximately 5 times more likely to experience IPV (p=0.002), while those with often quarreling are even more exposed to IPV – approximately 35 times more likely to experience IPV (p<0.001). As regards the choice of spouse or partner, women who have their spouses or partners chosen for them without their consent are approximately 8 times more likely to experience IPV as compared with those in partnerships where women and their partners chose one another (p<0.001). Nonetheless, it should be noted that the consent of the woman is of pivotal importance, as there is no significant difference in the experience of IPV by women in partnerships where both women and their partners chose one another and those in partnerships where others chose the women's partners but with their consent.

TABLE IV. COEFFICIENTS, CRUDE ODDS RATIOS*, 95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL AND *P*-VALUE OF THE SIMPLE BIVARIATE LOGISTIC REGRESSION

Variable	**Coefficient**	**OR (95% CI)**	***p*-value**
Woman's age group			0.359
18 – 29	0.00	1	
30 – 49	-0.20	0.82 (0.58 – 1.18)	0.287
50 and above	0.18	1.19 (0.63 – 2.25)	0.591
Partner's age group			0.470
18 – 29	0.00	1	
30 – 49	0.24	1.27 (0.81 – 1.99)	0.301
50 and above	0.05	1.05 (0.64 – 1.74)	0.846
Area			0.600
Urban	0.00	1	
Rural	-0.09	0.91 (0.65 – 1.28)	0.600
Woman literate			0.000
Yes	0.00	1	
No	1.01	2.74 (1.83 – 4.11)	0.000
Partner literate			0.008
Yes	0.00	1	
No	0.61	1.84 (1.17 – 2.90)	0.008
Woman's educational attainment			0.000
Tertiary/ Higher	0.00	1	
Secondary	0.39	1.48 (0.97 – 2.25)	0.068
None or Primary	1.38	3.97 (2.58 – 6.12)	0.000
Partner's educational attainment			0.000
Tertiary/ Higher	0.00	1	
Secondary	0.77	2.15 (1.43 – 3.32)	0.000
None or Primary	0.77	2.16 (1.39 – 3.35)	0.001
Woman in employment			0.612
Yes	0.00	1	
No	-0.10	0.90 (0.61 – 1.34)	0.612
Partner in employment			0.361
Yes	0.00	1	
No	-0.26	0.77 (0.44 – 1.35)	0.361
Partner's general history of physical aggression			0.000
No	0.00	1	
Yes	1.26	3.52 (2.39 – 5.20)	0.000
Woman (Respondent) do not know	0.54	1.72 (0.85 – 3.48)	0.134
Partner engaged in affairs with other women			0.000
No	0.00	1	
Yes	0.59	1.80 (1.10 – 2.96)	0.020
May have	1.28	3.61 (1.98 – 6.75)	0.000
Woman (Respondent) do not know	0.93	2.54 (1.59 – 4.05)	0.000

Partner's use of alcohol			0.000
Never	0.00	1	
Everyday	1.03	2.79 (1.80 – 4.33)	0.000
Once a week	0.87	2.40 (1.46 – 3.92)	0.001
1 – 3 times a month	0.37	1.45 (0.66 – 3.21)	0.358
Less than once a month	0.19	1.21 (0.44 – 3.36)	0.715
Partner's history of drugs use (substance abuse)			0.000
Never	0.00	1	
1 – 4 times a month	3.63	37.56 (4.71 – 299.31)	0.001
Everyday	2.91	18.36 (6.82 – 49.48)	0.000
Woman (Respondent) do not know	1.64	5.18 (2.95 – 9.09)	0.000
Partner's controlling behavior			0.000
None	0.00	1	
One	1.30	3.65 (1.15 – 11.58)	0.028
2 or 3	2.10	8.15 (2.89 – 22.97)	0.000
4 or more	3.18	23.96 (8.53 – 67.30)	0.000
Categorical number of children			0.091
5 or more	0.00	1	
3 – 4	-0.50	0.61 (0.38 – 0.98)	0.039
1 – 2	0.01	1.01 (0.60 – 1.68)	0.982
None	-0.31	0.74 (0.45 – 1.21)	0.229
Woman's frequency of communication with family			0.000
Corresponds at least once a week	0.00	1	
Corresponds at least once a month	0.52	1.68 (1.12 – 2.52)	0.012
Corresponds like once a year or hardly ever	1.03	2.80 (1.71 – 4.58)	0.000
Partnership status			0.476
Currently married	0.00	1	
Currently living with a man, but not married	0.26	1.30 (0.52 – 3.25)	0.576
Currently having a regular partner who lives apart	-0.27	0.77 (0.49 – 1.20)	0.243
Divorced/ broken up with partner	-0.68	0.51 (0.11 – 2.31)	0.380
Consummation of Partnership involves payments			0.814
No payments	0.00	1	
Dowry and/or bride price	0.10	1.11 (0.75 – 1.64)	0.608
Woman unaware	0.24	1.27 (0.52 – 3.08)	0.596
Partnership age difference			0.297
Woman is same age as partner	0.00	1	
Woman is older	-0.66	0.52 (0.09 – 3.03)	0.463
Woman is 1 – 4 years younger	0.13	1.14 (0.43 – 3.00)	0.788
Woman is 5 – 9 years younger	0.01	1.01 (0.38 – 2.68)	0.989
Woman is 10 or more years younger	-0.33	0.72 (0.27 – 1.95)	0.515
Partnership educational difference			0.006
Same level	0.00	1	
Partner better educated	0.58	1.78 (1.25 – 2.55)	0.002
Woman better educated	0.25	1.28 (0.64 – 2.57)	0.483
Partnership employment			0.222
Both employed	0.00	1	
Only woman employed	-1.12	0.33 (0.10 – 1.10)	0.071
Only partner employed	-0.27	0.76 (0.47 – 1.23)	0.264
Both unemployed	0.05	1.05 (0.56 – 1.96)	0.882
Partnership discord			0.000
Never	0.00	1	
Rarely	1.49	4.45 (1.76 – 11.28)	0.002
Often/ sometimes	3.55	34.76 (13.45 – 89.82)	0.000
Choice of spouse or partner			0.000
Both chose	0.00	1	
Woman (Respondent) chose	-1.03	0.36 (0.08 – 1.56)	0.170
Others chose with woman's consent	-0.24	0.78 (0.40 – 1.56)	0.487
Others chose without woman's consent	2.03	7.58 (3.66 – 15.73)	0.000

D. Multivariate Analysis (Sequential Logistic Regression)

1) Individual-level Predictors Model

Having conducted series of simple logistic regression analyses aimed at unraveling crude associations between different variables and IPV, the following variables were found to be significantly associated with IPV and included in the individual-level multi-variable analysis: woman literacy, partner literacy, educational attainment of woman and that of her partner, partner's history of physical aggression, partner engaged in affairs with other women, partner's use of alcohol, partner's history of drug use, partner's controlling behavior and categorical number of children. Furthermore, some other variables not found to be significantly associated with IPV were also considered for inclusion in the multivariable model based on their importance as highlighted in relevant literature.

These variables include: woman's age, partner's age and number of children, and evidence supporting their relevance could be found in the research work of [3,8,19-21].

Table V presents the details of variables in the final parsimonious model fitted at the individual level [χ^2 (25, N=719) = 235.76, p<0.001; Hosmer and Lemeshow: p=0.679]. After the multivariable analysis, variables including women's age group, women's educational attainment, partner's educational attainment, partner's controlling behavior and partner's use of drugs (substance taken for its narcotic effects) all having significant (main) effect in predicting IPV occurrence in the fitted model (p<0.05). Other variables (e.g., women's literacy and partner's age group) were all included in the model as covariates providing needed adjustment of the effects of the set of variables mentioned earlier. In other words, they are important confounders, even though their association with IPV is not statistically significant in the model (p>0.05).

In the main effect variables, women within the age group of 30 – 49 years compared with those in the youngest age group (18 – 29) were 2.3 times less likely to experience IPV (p=0.011). Considering women's educational attainment, lower attainment (primary education) or no attainment at all exposes women to IPV victimization (p<0.001), with women having primary or no attainments about 7 times more likely to experience IPV than those having higher attainments. As opposed to the case of women, partner's higher educational attainments actually increased the occurrence of violence (p=0.04). Compared with male partners having tertiary attainments, those with primary or no attainments at all indicated a lower perpetration of IPV – about 2.5 times less likely to commit violence (p=0.023). Regarding a partner's controlling behavior, the result shows that greater controlling behavior is directly proportional to a higher likelihood of perpetrating IPV (p<0.001). Indeed, partners exhibiting 4 or more controlling behaviors have a 26.8-fold increase in likelihood of perpetrating IPV compared to those without any controlling behavior. Results on partner's history of drug use show that, in comparison with male partners who have never used drugs, those who indulge in daily usage or 1 to 4 times a month were 16.8 to 46.5 times more likely to be perpetrators of IPV (p<0.001).

2) Relatiopnship-level Predictors Model

Furthermore, after the simple bivariate logistic regression analysis, the following relationship-level variables were significantly associated with IPV: partnership educational difference, partnership discord and choice of spouse or partner. Thus, the variables were entered into the relationship-level multivariable analysis. Besides, just as in the case of the individual-level multivariable analysis, other relationship-level variables not statistically related to IPV in the simple bivariate analysis – partnership age difference and consummation of partnership involving payments – were also considered. This extra inclusion was considered as research indicates the likely importance of the variables in predicting IPV [9,22,23].

In Table VI, the model fitted separately for relationship level variables [χ^2 (11, N=719) = 190.36, p<0.001; Hosmer and Lemeshow: p=0.651] shows that partnership age-difference, partnership educational difference, partnership discord and choice of spouse all contribute significantly to the model (p<0.05).

In terms of partnership age difference, women with partners who are 10 or more years older than themselves showed significant reduction in IPV occurrence, when compared with couples of equal age (p=0.032). The age difference conferred a 3.6-fold reduction in the likelihood of experiencing IPV. Considering partnership educational difference, men having better education than their partners were found to perpetrate IPV 2.1 times more than those having the same level of education as their partners (p=0.002). In comparison with women who reported no partnership discord, those who reported rare or frequent occurrence of discord were found to have a 5- and 38-fold increase in the experience of IPV, respectively (p<0.001). Regarding choice of spouse, cases where women had no say in selecting their partners showed a 5.2-fold increase in IPV experience, when compared with partnerships involving couples choosing one another of their own volition (p<0.001).

TABLE V. COEFFICIENTS, ADJUSTED ODDS RATIOS*, 95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL AND *P*-VALUE OF THE BEST FITTING LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODEL FOR THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL VARIABLES

Variable	Coefficient	OR (95% CI)	*p*-value
Woman's age group			0.036
18 – 29	0.00	1	
30 – 49	-0.85	0.43 (0.22 – 0.83)	0.011
50 and above	-0.56	0.57 (0.19 – 1.68)	0.308

Partner's age group			0.652
18 – 29	0.00	1	
30 – 49	0.34	1.40 (0.66 – 2.98)	0.382
50 and above	0.24	1.27 (0.47 – 3.45)	0.638
Woman literate			0.133
Yes	0.00	1	
No	-0.73	0.48 (0.19 – 1.25)	0.133
Woman's educational attainment			0.000
Tertiary/ Higher	0.00	1	
Secondary	0.36	1.43 (0.84 – 2.44)	0.193
None or Primary	1.94	6.98 (2.84 – 17.19)	0.000
Partner's educational attainment			0.040
Tertiary/ Higher	0.00	1	
Secondary	0.03	1.03 (0.58 – 1.84)	0.913
None or Primary	-0.90	0.41 (0.19 – 0.88)	0.023
Partner's general history of physical aggression			0.053
No	0.00	1	
Yes	0.66	1.94 (1.13 – 3.33)	0.017
Woman (Respondent) do not know	-0.02	0.98 (0.40 – 2.42)	0.969
Partner engaged in affairs with other women			0.056
No	0.00	1	
Yes	0.18	1.19 (0.60 – 2.37)	0.612
May have	0.95	2.58 (1.28 – 5.22)	0.008
Woman (Respondent) do not know	0.41	1.51 (0.87 – 2.61)	0.143
Partner's history of drugs use (substance abuse)			0.000
Never	0.00	1	
1 – 4 times a month	3.84	46.54 (4.88 – 443.94)	0.001
Everyday	2.82	16.82 (4.81 – 58.79)	0.000
Woman (Respondent) do not know	1.48	4.38 (2.17 – 8.85)	0.000
Partner's controlling behavior			0.000
None	0.00	1	
One	1.76	5.80 (1.63 – 20.63)	0.007
2 or 3	2.20	8.98 (2.88 – 27.97)	0.000
4 or more	3.29	26.80 (8.58 – 83.77)	0.000
Categorical number of children			0.086
5 or more	0.00	1	
3 – 4	-0.84	0.43 (0.23 – 0.82)	0.011
1 – 2	-0.61	0.54 (0.25 – 1.16)	0.115
None	-0.50	0.60 (0.25 – 1.45)	0.258
Woman's frequency of communication with family			0.104
Corresponds at least once a week	0.00	1	
Corresponds at least once a month	0.41	1.50 (0.91 – 2.46)	0.110
Corresponds like once a year or hardly ever	0.57	1.76 (0.94 – 3.33)	0.080

*Odds ratio adjusted for all the variables in the table (model)
OR = Odds ratio, CI = Confidence Interval

TABLE VI. COEFFICIENTS, ADJUSTED ODDS RATIOS*, 95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL AND *P*-VALUE OF THE BEST FITTING LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODEL FOR THE RELATIONSHIP LEVEL VARIABLES

Variable	**Coefficient**	**OR (95% CI)**	***p*-value**
Partnership age difference			0.002
Woman is same age as partner	0.00	1	
Woman is older	-0.76	0.47 (0.06 – 3.47)	0.458
Woman is 1 – 4 years younger	-0.18	0.84 (0.28 – 2.55)	0.755
Woman is 5 – 9 years younger	-0.70	0.50 (0.16 – 1.55)	0.230
Woman is 10 or more years younger	-1.28	0.28 (0.09 – 0.89)	0.032

Partnership educational difference			0.002
Same level	0.00	1	
Partner better educated	0.73	2.07 (1.35 – 3.17)	0.001
Woman better educated	-0.16	0.85 (0.37 – 1.99)	0.713
Partnership discord			0.000
Never	0.00	1	
Rarely	1.61	5.00 (1.94 – 12.88)	0.001
Often/ sometimes	3.64	38.03 (14.26 – 101.40)	0.000
Choice of spouse or partner			0.002
Both chose	0.00	1	
Respondent chose	-0.29	0.75 (0.16 – 3.44)	0.712
Others chose with woman's consent	-0.44	0.65 (0.29 – 1.43)	0.281
Others chose without woman's consent	1.65	5.21 (2.11 – 12.88)	0.000

*Odds ratio adjusted for all the variables in the table (model)
OR = Odds ratio, CI = Confidence Interval

V. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study show a relatively high level of IPV (about 1 out of every 4 women has experienced IPV at least once in her life-time), consistent with the pervasiveness reported by other research [3,7]. The study found that psychological abuse was the highest form of IPV experienced by women (life-time and current prevalence of 24.3% and 16.6%, respectively), lending further credence to observations of prior studies [15,24]. This high level of IPV victimization indicates how imperative it is for the government and other relevant stakeholders to act swiftly in providing support for abused women and, most importantly, develop policies to prevent the occurrence of violence.

The results also show widespread acceptance of wife-beating across urban and rural areas; which is, again, an indication of the need for greater IPV preventive measures. This need becomes even more pressing when one considers the fact that the level of acceptability of wife-beating recorded in this study is as high as (perhaps even higher than) those recorded around the world, especially those in Latin American countries – some of whom have deemed this issue very serious and have taken certain steps to address the issue [18,21,22,25,26]. Besides, the results showing literate women to be more supportive of wife-beating might be an indication of patriarchy and cultural approval of violence against women within the Nigerian society. The results could also suggest the plausibility of exchange theory as expressed by [27] – decrease in violence as women's economic resource/ power increases. These two notions (i.e., cultural approval of violence and exchange theory) could be pertinent as literacy is likely to confer some form of economic power on literate women (e.g., greater likelihood of getting better paid jobs) and as a result have less exposure to IPV, but with the influence of dominant societal norms of patriarchy they may accept wife-beating under certain 'socially justified' conditions. On the other hand, illiterate women may be exposed to greater IPV victimizations due to limited economic leverage and, as a result, develop an aversion towards wife-beating despite cultural approval of such violence as a normative practice in asserting male authority. Thus, the probable deficient sensitivity of literate women to IPV issues fueled by patriarchal societal norms is a further testament to the need for more robust policies and actions, preferably those built on school-based enlightenment schemes/ interventions or based on community mobilization and mass communication for social change, as these strategies have been shown to have effective impact on raising awareness about the issue of IPV and prevention of its occurrence [3,21,28,29].

Moreover, the analysis performed in fitting the best and most parsimonious model for individual-level variables indicates that women's age, women's and partner's educational attainments, partner's history of drug use, and partner's controlling behavior all associate significantly with IPV. In the case of relationship-level variables, factors such as partnership age difference, partnership educational difference, partnership discord, and choice of partner were statistically significant. Some of these factors at both individual- and relationship-level have also been reported by other studies, especially those conducted in developed countries, to strongly associate with IPV occurrence in a similar fashion, while others have shown different results.

The individual-level model suggests that young age amongst women increases the likelihood of experiencing IPV, corroborating the results of other studies that indicate similar findings [30,31]. In terms of educational attainment, low level of attainment has been consistently reported in association with male perpetration and women victimization of IPV [9,11,12]. In line with these findings, women with lower educational attainment in this study were found to experience significantly higher occurrence of IPV. On the opposite side, results pertaining to male partner educational attainment in this study refute those of the earlier studies stated, as higher educational attainment was found to increase IPV perpetration. Nonetheless, this particular finding lends credence to resource theory – which posits that male violence is a resource of last resort when other forms of resources are unavailable [32,33]. This is plausible as a lot of graduates of higher institutions in Nigeria are unemployed and struggle to make ends meet, making them a likely user of the 'last resort' (violence) when other resources that can support standard living are not available. The applicability of resource theory is germane, despite the fact that analyses pertaining to employment status (simple logistic regression analysis of male partner employment in particular) show that there is no significant difference in the likelihood of experiencing IPV between women whose partners

are employed and those with unemployed partners. This is so because being employed in Nigeria does not necessarily imply having the resources to make ends meet, especially with studies showing that most jobs simply pay too little in the country [34].

Considering controlling behavior, the results of this study indicating a higher IPV perpetration with greater control corroborate those of [9] who found that such behavior was strongly associated with IPV across a host of different countries. With regard to male partner drug use, strong positive correlations with IPV perpetration have been reported by various studies, even after controlling for women's substance abuse [35,36]. The results of this study are also consistent with these prior findings.

Furthermore, research has shown that women with a higher level of education relative to their partners are more prone to IPV experience [12,37]. However, the results in this study indicate that women with lower educational attainment than their male partners are more predisposed to experiencing IPV. This finding supports that of [11], and lends a further credence to the plausibility of resource theory as stated earlier. Studies have reported varying results on the association of IPV with age disparity between male and female partners, but a dominant finding is that women with older partners (at least five or more years older) have lower likelihood of experiencing IPV [9,19]. The results of this study also show similar association. Just as in age disparity, research on women taking an active role in choosing their partners has come up with contrasting results. The most common view is that lack of say in the choice of partner is significantly associated with IPV occurrence [9], and this is also supported by the results in this study. Relationship discord is another factor that associates with IPV in this study, with discord increasing the likelihood of IPV by several folds. The work of [23] provides additional evidence supporting these results.

Finally, having considered the similarities of the results in this study with those elsewhere, it can be concluded that controllable factors such as educational attainment (especially that of women), male partner's drug use, controlling behavior, restricted liberty of women in selecting their partners, and partnership discord should all be given reasonable consideration in terms of policy setting and development of preventive interventions. Furthermore, the level of acceptability of IPV (wife-beating) should also be of major concern, and as stated earlier school-based interventions and community awareness campaigns could go a long way in addressing this particular issue. In addition, pre-school enrichment programs and other programs promoting equal access to education for males and females would help improve women's educational attainment along with those of their male counterparts and could also provide a strong platform for other preventive actions. Adopting this kind of strategy would not just help stem down IPV, it would also support the achievement of targets of important movements, e.g., the UN Millennium Development Goals, especially goal 3 - Gender Equality and Women Empowerment, and goal 2 – Universal Primary Education [38].

Nonetheless, the findings of this study have shown that situations elsewhere do not necessarily mirror what is happening in Nigeria. As a result, adopting a one-size-fits-all approach to intervention (i.e., direct usage of policies/intervention developed for other countries or settings) would not always succeed and therefore there is a need for more exploration of in-country IPV issues, as well as for the design of appropriate interventions tailored to capture the somewhat unique Nigerian experience.

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