

Original Article

Perception, and Experience of Domestic Violence among Women in a Rural Community in Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Background: Domestic violence (DV) occurs in all settings, transcending socio-cultural and demographic profiles. It is pervasive, insidious, carried out in private domain, and usually inflicted by family members. It continues over long period and limits avenues of escape for victims. The aim of this study was to assess the perception and experience of DV among rural women in Sabon Gari LGA of Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Methodology: A cross-sectional descriptive study conducted in Tohu community, Sabon Gari LGA, Kaduna State. Sample size of 365 was determined using Fisher's formula, at p-value, reliability coefficient, confidence interval, degree of freedom, and possible attrition rate of 0.5, 1.96, 95%, 0.05, and 16% respectively. The study population comprised all women of reproductive age group in Tohu. Eligible respondents who had been in the community for at least one year were included in the study, while those who were ill were excluded. A semi-structured, interviewer-administered questionnaire was administered by female research assistants, and data collected was analyzed using SPSS version 21.0. Frequencies and percentages were reported for categorical data. Respondents' perception of DV was assessed using 19 questions across 5 domains. Composite score of 0-19 was expected for each respondent. Scores of ≥ 10 , and < 10 were considered to be good, and poor perception of DV respectively. Relationships between variables were determined using appropriate test statistics at p-value ≤ 0.05 .

Results: Fifty-three percent of respondents have good perception of DV, with age, marital status, and occupation affecting respondents' perception. Seventeen percent of respondents had experienced physical and/or verbal abuse. Marital status and level of education were found to affect respondents' experience of DV.

Conclusion: DV is still rife in rural parts of Nigeria. Civil rights groups should intensify efforts toward awareness creation so that victims can report to the appropriate authorities and the perpetrators prosecuted.

Keywords: Perception; Experience; Domestic violence; Rural women; Nigeria.

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Introduction

Domestic violence is the most common type of violence against women. It encompasses all forms of violence against, or abuse of women by their intimate partners, be it physical, emotional and or sexual. Domestic violence occurs in all settings.¹It transcends all cultures, educational levels, races, ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic classes, and religions. It is pervasive, insidious, carried out in the private domain, and usually inflicted by a family member. It continues over a long period of time and limits avenues of escape for the victim.²Studies have shown that at least one woman in every three has suffered a form of domestic violence or the other in her lifetime.³This has significantly affected their social, political, and economic life⁴ with resultant damage to family life required for individual members to attain their potentials.¹

The UN World Conference on Human Rights (UNWCHR) of 1993 and the UN General Assembly's adoption of the declaration on the elimination of violence against women of the same year, placed violence against women at the forefront of human rights discourse, making domestic violence against women an increasingly recognized and discussed topic at national and international fora.

The prevalence of domestic violence against women and girls is high worldwide; within the range of 10% to 70% as reported by WHO.⁵Multi-center population-based surveys around the world demonstrate that domestic violence is prevalent, justified and often condoned in developing countries. This is also said to be worse during pregnancy with serious effects on pregnancy outcomes including increased risk of miscarriages, abortions, premature labour, foetal distress, low birth weight infants, and even infant death when compared to the industrialized countries where the prevalence is relatively lower.⁵Most cases of violence also go unnoticed and undocumented due to socio-cultural reasons. Reasons justifying domestic violence against women range from bad cooking, disrespect to in-laws, producing more girl children, and leaving home without informing the husband, among others.^{6,7,8,9}While few women admitted to being victims of domestic violence, fewer women report such cases of violence.¹⁰ Studies further showed that about 60% of those that reported cases of domestic violence actually reported to their parents or a family member, and in about 70% to 75% of cases were counseled to remain mute and endure the battering.^{10,11} This has resulted in a long, escalating pattern of battering with women dying at the hands of their male partners, homeless on the streets avoiding the batterers, and several more committing suicide to exit violent homes.¹²

In Nigeria, like in other African countries, wives beating is seen as a disciplinary measure for misbehaviour.⁹Women, both married and unmarried, are beaten and ill-treated, raped, and even murdered by members of their families in Nigeria daily. In certain cases of such abuse, acid is used with resultant high morbidity and mortality, lengthy hours of medical and surgical salvage, and residual lifelong horrific disfigurements and disabilities. More than 97% of the abused women do not report the crime to the authorities, and victims are often ashamed or embarrassed to report the violence to the appropriate bodies for documentation, investigation, and possible justice because domestic violence against women is considered a private family matter that should be kept away from public intervention.¹¹

Studies carried out in Nigeria showed the prevalence of domestic violence across different regions of the country range from 41% in Nigeria's south south,¹³42% in the north,¹⁴29% in the south-west,¹⁵ and 78.8% in the southeastern region of the country,¹⁶with reported forms of abuse being physical, sexual, spiritual, economic, emotional, general neglect, deprivation, and failure to provide or cater for spousal needs. Some of the identified risk factors for domestic violence include alcoholism, no or little inter-spousal communication, and lack of, or low autonomy of women.¹⁷

Women's physical, emotional, and social wellbeing are significantly impacted by domestic violence experiences.¹⁸Compared to those who have not experienced abuse, women who experience domestic violence exhibit more physical injuries, signs and symptoms of ill health, as well as more missed workdays.¹⁸

The conduct of this study is therefore justified because the overall effects of domestic violence are incalculable because they not only have an immediate impact on the victims themselves, but also on their families, friends, colleagues, and communities. Every socioeconomic class and age are affected by domestic violence, which has its roots in societies that exhibit male and female power disparities in the context of familial interactions. Community norms affect attitudes and actions connected to domestic abuse. Knowledge about attitude and prevalence of domestic violence among Women in rural communities in Kaduna State and indeed northern Nigeria is insufficient to solve this issue, nor is it adequate to refute the assumptions and ideas held by the communities. To create a customized intervention to lessen the violence and assist policy makers in finding lasting solution in the fight against domestic violence, which has been a major concern of both the national and international community.

As domestic violence against women becomes a topical issue, there arises the need for experience sharing in terms of its prevalence, risk factors, and consequences. As efforts are made to curb this menace through health education, community awareness and legislation, a question keeps emerging: What is domestic violence like among rural women? There is a dearth of studies to answer this pertinent question.

This study, therefore, aimed to determine the prevalence and perception of domestic violence among rural women in Tohu village, Sabon Gari LGA, Kaduna state. This study is limited only to the prevalence, perception, and experience of domestic violence among rural women while excluding issues like consequences and outcomes of domestic violence. The information from this study can be used in making policies that will help to reduce the burden, effect, and impact of domestic violence.

Methodology

Study Design and Area

The study was a cross-sectional descriptive study carried out in Tohu, a rural community in Sabon Gari Local Government Area (LGA) of Kaduna State, Northwest Nigeria. Kaduna is the second most populous state in northern Nigeria after Kano, and third in the country with a projected population of over eight (8) million people. Sabon Gari is among the most populous of the twenty-three LGAs in the state. Tohu is bounded to the east by Zabi, to the west by Basawa and a lake in between, to the northeast by Sakadadi, to the north by Unguwan Rimi and a lake in between, to the southeast by Palladan, and to the south by Kabama. Tohu is a Hausa – Fulani-dominated community with more than 99% of its population being Muslim. Farming and animal husbandry is the major occupation of its people. There is a Primary Health Care facility in Tohu which was established in 2012 and has contributed immensely to the development of the health status of the community and adjacent communities. The community is connected to the national power grid. It also has few boreholes, with dug wells being the major source of drinking water all year round. There is a primary school and a skill acquisition centre in the community.¹⁹ However, there is no police station or other authorities for reporting cases of abuse. The community members also have no access to programmes to educate them on issues related to abuse.

Sampling and Data Collection

Minimum sample size for the study was estimated using Fisher's formula²⁰ with P – value of 0.5, reliability coefficient of 1.96 at 95% Confident Interval, and a degree of freedom of 0.05. A possible attrition rate of 16% was factored into the estimated sample size, hence an estimated minimum sample size of 365 was obtained for the study. The study population comprised all women of reproductive age group (aged 15 – 49 years) in the community (total population study). Women of reproductive age who had been in the community for at least one year were included in the study, while those who were acutely ill were excluded from the study. In each household, a pre-tested, semi-structured, interviewer-administered questionnaires was electronically administered using hand-held Android devices using Open Data Kit (ODK) software to all women of reproductive age group (15 – 49 years) during the months of June - July 2021.

A team of five (5) female research assistants were recruited and trained for this study. They were trained for three days. Training covered the objectives of the study, questionnaire administration, ethical issues in

research, ODK, the study protocol, domestic violence, and effective communication. The researchers supervised the data collection process and ensured that the research protocol was strictly adhered to.

Data Management and Analysis

All the 365 electronic questionnaires administered were assessed and found to be correctly completed. Data analysis was done under the supervision of an experienced statistician, using the computer software, IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0. Data analysis was started with computing the frequencies and percents of respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. For univariate analysis, Simple frequencies and percentages were reported for categorical data.

Respondents' perception of domestic violence was assessed using a set of 19 questions across 5 major domains. All questions were equal in weight and for every response a point was awarded. A combined or composite score of 0 to 19 was expected for each respondent. Using each respondent's combined or composite score, perception of domestic violence was assessed. Respondents with combined or composite score of ≥ 10 were considered to have good perception of domestic violence, while those with combined or composite score of <10 were considered to have poor perception.

The findings were summarized using appropriate tables and relationships between variables were determined using appropriate test statistics. Results were considered statistically significant if p-value was ≤ 0.05 .

Ethical Clearance

Ethical clearance was sought for and obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee of Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital, Zaria (ABUTH/HREC/CL/05) before commencement of the study. The nature and objectives of the study was explained to each participant and assurance of confidentiality and anonymity given, to obtain evidence based, informed, written consent for participation in the study by way of signing or thumb printing the consent form. Participation was completely voluntary, and individuals who do not consent to participate in the study were exempted. The respondents' right to voluntary participation and right to withdraw at any stage of the study, or absolute refusal to participate in the study was emphasized and duly respected.

Results

Table 1: Socio–Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Age Group	Frequency (%) (n = 365)
15 – 19	97(26.57)
20 – 24	60(16.44)
25 – 29	41(11.23)
30 – 34	43(11.78)
35 – 39	35(9.59)
40 – 44	26(7.12)
45 – 49	16(4.38)
50 – 54	21(5.75)
55 – 59	11(3.01)
>59	15(4.11)
Tribe	
Hausa	325(89.04)
Fulani	38(10.41)
Igbo	1(0.27)
Yoruba	1(0.27)

Religion	
Islam	363(99.45)
Christianity	2(0.55)
Occupation	
None	247(67.67)
Artisan	37(10.14)
Petty trading	49(13.42)
Civil service	27(4.40)
Others	5(1.37)
Marital status	
Single	13(3.56)
Married	330(90.41)
Divorced	5(1.37)
Widowed	17(4.66)
Level of education	
None	104(28.49)
Qur'anic	65(17.81)
Primary	132(36.16)
Secondary	59(16.16)
Post-secondary	5(1.37)

About 26.6% of respondents were within the age bracket of 15–19years. Almost all (99.45%) of the respondents were Hausa - Fulani, Muslim (99.45%) faithful. Most (90.41%) of them were married, more than one-third (36.16%) obtained primary school certificate, and two-thirds (67.67%) were not gainfully employed.

Perception of Domestic Violence among Respondents

Table 2: Perception of Domestic Violence among Respondents

Perception of Domestic Violence	Frequency (%) (n = 365)
Good Perception	195 (53.42)
Poor Perception	170 (46.58)
Total	365 (100.00%)

Table 2 above revealed that 195 (53.42%) of the respondents have good perception of domestic violence.

Table 3: Perception of Domestic Violence

Variable	Frequency (%) (n = 365)
Types of Domestic Violence	
Verbal Abuse	313 (85.8)
Physical Abuse	292 (80.0)
Early and Forced Marriage	125 (34.2)
Sexual Abuse	111 (30.4)
Incest	56 (15.3)
Starvation	10 (2.7)
Justification for Domestic Violence	
There is no justification for Domestic Violence	288 (78.9)
Reason for Domestic Violence	
Leaving Home without Informing Spouse	227 (62.19)
Disrespect to Spouse	231 (63.29)
Disrespect to In-Laws	223 (61.10)
Lack of Adequate Care for the Children	178 (48.76)
Refusing Conjugal Relations with Spouse	249 (68.22)
Burnt/Bad food	119 (32.60)
Producing More Girl Children	47 (12.88)
Need to Report Case(s) of Domestic Violence	
Is there Need to Report all Case(s) of Domestic Violence	287 (78.63)
Whom to Report Case(s) of Domestic Violence to	
Parent/Guardian	244 (66.85)
Other Family Numbers	220 (60.27)
Friends	217 (59.45)
Police/Other law enforcement agents	107 (29.32)

Table 3 above revealed that most of the respondents perceived verbal and physical abuses as forms of domestic violence in 85.8% and 80.0% of cases respectively. With regards to any justification for domestic violence, most of the respondents, 288 (78.9%) perceived no justification for any form of domestic violence. Majority of the respondents, 249 (68.22%), perceived refusing conjugal relations with spouses as major reasons for domestic violence. When asked about reporting cases of domestic violence, most of the respondents, 287 (78.63%), perceived the need to report all cases of domestic violence, with majority of the perception, 244 (66.85%), being reporting such cases to parents or guardian of the victims.

Socio-Demographic Factors Affecting Respondents' Perception of Domestic Violence

Table 4: Socio-Demographic Factors Affecting Respondents' Perception of Domestic Violence

Variable	Perception of Domestic Violence (%)			χ^2	Df	p-value	Fisher's Exact Test p-value
	Good Perception n = 195	Poor Perception n = 170	Total n = 365				
Age Group							
15 – 19	38	59	97(26.57)	22.925	9	0.006*	-
20 – 24	41	19	60(16.44)				
25 – 29	23	18	41(11.23)				

30 – 34	27	16	43(11.78)				
35 – 39	21	14	35(9.59)				
40 – 44	19	7	26(7.12)				
45 – 49	7	9	16(4.38)				
50 – 54	8	13	21(5.75)				
55 – 59	5	6	11(3.01)				
>59	6	9	15(4.11)				
Tribe							
Hausa	186	139	325(89.04)	22.347	3	< 0.001	<0.001*
Fulani	7	31	38(10.41)				
Igbo	1	0	1(0.27)				
Yoruba	1	0	1(0.27)				
Religion							
Islam	193	170	363(99.45)	1.753	1	0.185	2.685
Christianity	2	0	2(0.55)				
Occupation							
None	144	103	247(67.67)	24.41	4	<0.001	<0.001*
Artisan	11	26	37(10.14)				
Petty trading	17	32	49(13.42)				
Civil service	21	6	27(4.40)				
Others	2	3	5(1.37)				
Marital status							
Single	7	6	13(3.56)	11.843	3	0.008	0.023*
Married	181	149	330(90.41)				
Divorced	1	4	5(1.37)				
Widowed	6	11	17(4.66)				
Level of education							
None	29	75	104(28.49)	55.233	4	< 0.001	< 0.001
Qur'anic	46	19	65(17.81)				
Primary	68	64	132(36.16)				
Secondary	48	11	59(16.16)				
Post-secondary	4	1	5(1.37)				

***Statistically significant**

At bivariate level, respondents' perception of Domestic violence was found to be significantly affected by age (0.006), tribe (< 0.001), occupation (< 0.001), marital status (0.023), and level of education (< 0.001).

Table 5: Predictors of Respondents' Perception of Domestic Violence

Variables	Crude OR (95% CI)	Adjusted OR (95% CI)	p - value
Age			
< 30 years	1		
≥ 30years	1.6 (0.86 – 2.64)	2.7 (1.34 – 3.62)	0.036*
Tribe			
Hausa/Fulani	1		
Others	1.2 (0.89 – 2.48)	0.5 (0.21 – 4.67)	0.612
Marital Status			
Ever Married	1		
Never Married	1.4 (0.67 – 3.92)	2.1 (1.14 – 5.37)	0.010*
Level of Education			
Informal	1		
Formal	1.6 (0.98 – 2.65)	0.3 (0.17 – 0.94)	0.634
Occupation			
Employed	1		
Unemployed	7 (0.41 – 0.97)	1.9 (1.33 – 5.62)	0.023*

***Statistically significant**

Multivariate analysis revealed that age, marital status, and occupation were significant factors affecting respondents' perception of domestic violence. The result revealed that respondents ≥ 30 years were almost three times more likely to have poor perception [aOR=2.7, 95% CI (1.34 – 3.62)] of domestic violence compared to those < 30 years ($p=0.036$). Respondents never married, and those not gainfully employed were also found to be twice more likely to have poor perception [aOR=2.1, 95% CI (1.14 – 5.37)], [aOR=1.9, 95% CI (1.33 – 5.62)] of domestic violence compared to those ever married ($p=0.101$) and those gainfully employed ($p=0.023$) respectively.

Prevalence of Domestic Violence among Respondents

Of all the respondents studied, only 64 (17.0%) of them admitted having experienced one form of domestic violence or the other, with 12 (3.3%) of them reported ever being sexually assaulted. About a third (35.5%) of all the victims reported such cases of domestic violence, with most (72.72%) of them reporting to their parents, and none reporting to the police or law enforcement agents.

Socio-Demographic Factors Affecting Respondents' Experience of Domestic Violence**Table 6:** Socio-Demographic Factors Affecting Respondents' Experience of Domestic Violence

Age Group	Ever Abused	Never Abused	Total (n = 365)	χ^2	df	χ^2 p-value	Fisher's Exact Test p-value
15 – 19	11	86	97	11.18	9	0.263	-
20 – 24	11	49	60				
25 – 29	9	32	41				
30 – 34	7	36	43				
35 – 39	10	25	35				
40 – 44	5	21	26				
45 – 49	5	11	16				
50 – 54	2	19	21				
55 – 59	1	10	11				
>59	1	14	15				

Tribe						
Hausa	54	271	9.85	3	0.020	0.067
Fulani	6	32				
Igbo	1	0				
Yoruba	1	0				
Religion						
Islam	60	303	9.83	1	0.002	0.008*
Christianity	2	0				
Occupation						
None	41	206	1.98	4	0.740	0.813
Artisan	6	31				
Petty trading	8	41				
Civil service	5	22				
Others	2	3				
Marital status						
Single	6	7	27.93	3	< 0.001	< 0.001*
Married	45	285				
Divorced	3	2				
Widowed	8	9				
Level of education						
None	11	93	18.85	4	< 0.001*	< 0.001*
Qur'anic	8	57				
Primary	36	96				
Secondary	5	54				
Post-secondary	2	3				

*Statistically significant

Table 6 above revealed that at bivariate level, respondents' experience of domestic violence was significantly affected by religion (0.008), marital status (< 0.001), and level of education (< 0.001)

Table 7: Predictors of Respondents' Experience of Domestic Violence

Variables	Crude OR (95% CI)	Adjusted OR (95% CI)	p - value
Religion			
Christianity	1		0.431
Islam	2.3 (0.74 – 2.23)	1.7 (0.44 – 3.21)	
Marital Status			
Currently not in any union	1		0.042*
Currently in a union	1.4 (0.67 – 3.92)	0.51 (1.75 – 4.14)	
Level of Education			
Formal	1		
Non/informal	5.1 (0.31 - 074)	1.4 (1.27 – 6.42)	0.027*

***Statistically significant**

On multivariate analysis, marital status and level of education were significant factors affecting respondents' experience of domestic violence. The table above showed that respondents currently in any form of union are 50% less likely to experience domestic violence [aOR=0.51, 95% CI (1.75 – 4.14)]. Respondents with no or some informal education have 40% increased likelihood of experiencing domestic violence when compared with their counterparts with formal education [aOR=1.4, 95% CI (1.27 – 6.42)].

Discussion

This study was conducted to determine the prevalence and perception of domestic violence among women in a rural community in Kaduna State. Our result shows that about half of the respondents had good perception of domestic violence. This perception, however, did not translate into the ability reduce or completely stop domestic violence among women in the community. This is because traditional and cultural practices still hold sway and are perceived by respondents as responsible in sustaining the domination of women including domestic violence.

A high proportion of the respondents felt that there was no justification for domestic violence, this is quite unexpected in a rural community where domestic violence is likely to be excused. This justification rate of domestic violence among the respondents was lower than values reported from other studies among rural Nigerian women.²¹ This finding may not be unconnected to the high proportion of the study respondents with formal education. Empirical evidence demonstrates that women with more education are assumed to communicate better, and this ability may serve as protective factor for domestic violence by their spouses of partners.

Respondents' reasons for justifying domestic violence in our study vary, with refusing conjugal relationship with spouse, disrespect to spouse, leaving home without informing the spouse, and disrespect to in-laws being most common. This is similar to findings reported among both urban and rural women in the country.²¹

Most of the respondents believe that there is a need to report all cases of domestic violence. However, the majority of them want such cases of domestic violence to be reported to their parents, guardians, other family members, and friends, rather than the police or other law enforcement agents. This further buttress the fact that cultural silence persists, and abused women do not want to report their husbands to the law enforcement agents and suffer more abuse in their hands after reporting them. This is worse among rural women in developing countries owing to cultural isolation they suffer following the report or the unpleasant treatment they experienced from the police, or both.

The study revealed that young age (< 30 years) remains a protective factor for respondents against poor perception of domestic violence. This contrasts with findings from previous studies that revealed the vulnerability of younger women to domestic violence.^{22,23} Our findings, however, were similar to those reported by Owusu²⁴ and his colleagues in Ghana that showed that young women are less likely to appreciate the complex nature of domestic violence in terms of its types, severity, predisposing factors, and consequences compared to women with advanced age.

Our study also revealed that women in legal union and those gainfully employed tend to have better perception of domestic violence. This is in consonance with several studies^{25,26} affirming that empowered and independent housewives have better perception of domestic violence. However, our study contradicts other findings²⁷ that establish no significant relationship between women perception of domestic violence, and their marital or occupational status, but rather strong socio-cultural influence, and rising levels of literacy among contemporary women.

Women education is an important tool. It dictates the type of lifestyle women lead and how much she will earn. It equips and empowers them with knowledge to reason independently for better choices and decision-

making in their lives. Education builds girl-child's capacity for economic prosperity, self-dependence and awareness of what constitutes domestic violence within their societies and culture. With education and enlightenment, advocacy will be more effective and rural women will have a voice within their societies. Previous studies^{22,23} have found that higher educational level (secondary level and above) for both women and their spouses is a proven protective shield against perception and experience of domestic violence. In contrast, other studies have revealed that educational differences between couples is a potential risk factor for domestic violence.²⁸ Our study however, showed no significant relationship between respondents' tribe and level of education on one hand, and their perception of domestic violence on the other hand in our study. This study showed a period prevalence of domestic violence of 16.99% among the respondents; high enough to guide policymakers to start looking for ways to address the vice. This finding, though lower than NDHS values for Kaduna state, and rural settings which stand at 28.7%, and 29.8% respectively,²⁹ as well as the values reported by Dienye et al (41%);¹³ and Tanimu et al (42%);¹⁴ respectively. It is, however, comparable with the findings of the NDHS 2013²⁹ that suggests that 19% of women are exposed to domestic violence from their partners or husbands. It is also similar to findings of WHO study¹⁷ that revealed prevalence of domestic violence in the range of 13%-61% in ten countries representing diverse socio-cultural settings. The low value reported by our study may not be unconnected to the methodological differences in these surveys, low educational status, and significantly high proportion of poor perception of domestic violence among the respondents.

Sexual assault was found to be low (3.3%) by this study as compared to a similar study in southeast Nigeria¹⁶ where one-fifth of the respondents confessed to having been forced to have sexual intercourse. The value is equally lower than the 7.8% and 4.6% rural communities and Kaduna state values respectively as reported by the NDHS.²⁹ The low prevalence of sexual assault in our study is probably due to the fact that a number of the respondents do not necessarily know if they had been abused or not because over the years, they have come to accept this abusive behavior of their partners as 'normal'.

The finding that about a third (35.5%) of all victims of domestic violence reported such cases is very crucial to guide policy making towards addressing domestic violence in general population and reducing its consequent complications. That notwithstanding, there is the need to enlighten victims to report cases to appropriate authorities for documentation, investigation and possible justice, because our findings revealed that 72.72% of such victims resort to reporting the cases to their parents who encouraged the culture of silence by shielding it from public scrutiny either due to fear of reprisal from abusers, or due to lack of confidence in the law enforcement agents who often times dismiss complaints of domestic violence as a 'private matter' belonging to the private sphere in Nigeria.

This study showed that significantly more respondents currently in formal union are less likely to experience domestic violence during the period of study than would their counterparts not in any form of union. This may not be unconnected to the fact that marriage develops, prevents, and prepares women to know their rights and speak out when such rights are infringed upon by their spouses or partners. Furthermore, in many African societies, marriage is viewed as a symbol of value for women, and their children quickly rise to their defense in instances of perceived or experienced domestic violence.^{30,31}

This study also showed that compared to respondents with formal education, significantly more respondents with no or some informal education will experience more domestic violence. These findings agree with previous reports that suggested that women who were less educated and less likely to be employed were more likely to experience domestic violence.^{22,23,28,32}

However, some of the limitations of this study include recall bias because of the retrospective nature of some of the questions asked, willful misstatements, and reluctance by some respondents to admit to being victims of domestic violence for fear of being stigmatized.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study has established that perception of domestic violence was good and prevalence of domestic violence among women in Tohu Community of Sabon Gari LGA of Kaduna state is high, with several rural women enduring more than one form of domestic violence. The study also found that socio-demographic factors affect the perception and experience of domestic violence among such women, with many of the respondents unaware of the abuse. Finally, this study has established that cases of domestic violence among women in rural communities go unreported by the victims due to fear, embarrassment, or both.

Consequently, it was recommended that there is a need for the State and Local Government Health Authorities to conduct regular health education and community awareness campaigns on the prevalence of domestic violence and how to identify and help victims of domestic violence; rural women should be empowered by the community to improve their socio-economic status and self-worth in their families and communities and to stand against domestic violence; women of Tohu village should also be encouraged by community and Local Government Authority to report cases of domestic violence to the appropriate authorities; and family members and the community should drive the advocacy process and provide support for victims of domestic violence.

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