



Demographic Determinants of Domestic Violence in Rural Areas of Ethiopia East Local Government of Delta State, Nigeria

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Numerous studies have pinpointed variables linked to women's risk of experiencing domestic abuse. However, demographic factors influencing domestic violence in rural Ethiopia East Local Government regions have not been thoroughly studied, if at all. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the demographic characteristics linked to domestic violence in rural Ethiopia East LGA of Delta State. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey design in generating data to answer the research questions as well as test the hypotheses. The target population for the study was adults in aged 18 years and above. The choice of the target group is because of it is the legitimate age for one to be considered as adult in Nigeria and therefore can give required information on issues about domestic violence. A sample of 209 respondents was used for the study. The multi-stage sampling procedure and purposive technique were used in this study. Questionnaire was the major instrument for data collection in this study. The study shows that there was a statistically significant relationship ($p < .005$) between sex and perception of partner as unfaithful. The study also indicated significant relationship ($p < .000$) between place of residence and engagement in domestic violence. The study recommended among other things the need to bring change in behaviour regarding the same in the community.

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Demographic Determinants; Domestic Violence; Ethiopia East Local Government

Introduction

Husbands abusing their wives are a widespread issue in both public health and human rights¹. For instance, 34% of Indian women who are of reproductive age report having ever been the victim of physical abuse at home (Mumbai 2007). According to Raikar and Pratinidhi (2008), women in Pune's slum regions had a higher likelihood of experiencing domestic violence (22.9%) than women in non-slum areas (14%). The detrimental effects of violence on women's health have been acknowledged on a global scale. Domestic violence lowers the usage of contraceptives and increases the occurrence of unwanted pregnancies and abortions (Begum, Dwivedi, Pandey, and Mittal 2010; Campbell 2002; Heise, Ellsberg, and Gottmoeller 2002). Pregnancy-related domestic violence raises the risk of baby and child death (Arthur and Clark 2009). Pregnancy-related domestic violence victims are less likely to receive prenatal care. There is a danger of infection and issues with sexual health when sexual assault is linked to vaginal, anal, or urethral trauma (Stephenson and Koenig 2006). Domestic abuse has an impact on women's mental and physical health (Vachher and Sharma 2010). Numerous research studies have pinpointed variables linked to women's risk of experiencing domestic abuse. However, demographic factors influencing domestic violence in rural Ethiopia East Local Government regions have not been thoroughly studied, if at all. Nonetheless, there are still few demographic factors that determine domestic violence in rural Ethiopia East Local Government regions. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the demographic characteristics linked to domestic violence in rural Ethiopia East LGA of Delta State.

Conceptualizing Violence against Women

The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) presents a definition characterizing violence against women as 'any act of gender-based violence resulting in or likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women.' This definition highlights the gender-based nature of violence, acknowledging its role in subjugating women relative to men. It expands the scope of violence by encompassing both physical and psychological harm against women in public and private settings. Furthermore, the Declaration identifies three spheres of violence against women: familial, community-based, and those condoned or perpetrated by the State, although this is not an exhaustive categorization. Again, the United Nations, in the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action (BFA) of 1995, reinforces their definition of violence against women as any gender-based act leading to physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering. This includes threats, coercion, or arbitrary denial of liberty, whether in public or private settings (Medical Women's Association of Nigeria, Rivers State Branch, 2023). Within our environment, prevalent forms of violence against women and girls encompass physical violence, sexual offences (such as rape and harassment), harmful practices in widowhood, spouse abandonment, kidnapping, female genital cutting, among others. Globally, violence against women and girls has emerged as a significant public health concern, with statistics indicating that one in three women (33%) experiences some form of violence in their lifetime (Medical Women's Association of Nigeria, Rivers State Branch, 2023). In Nigeria, the statistics are alarming, with one in every four women reported to have experienced domestic violence (Benebo, Schumann & Vaezghasemi, 2018). Yet, the actual extent remains elusive due to under-reporting. The ramifications of such violence are profound, affecting women's health, economic stability, and overall well-being. The impact transcends individual lives, permeating society by impeding economic growth and perpetuating gender inequality (Adebayo, 2014; Kimuna, 2013). Recognizing the severity of this issue, global initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have included specific targets to eliminate violence against women and foster gender equality (Gupta & Vegelin, 2016).

In Nigeria, Fawole and colleagues who studied both male and female civil servants in Ibadan, found that being young, unmarried and having a history of parental violence in the partner were significantly associated with a woman being a victim of IPV.¹⁴ On the part of the perpetrator, men who abused alcohol and other psychoactive substances were more likely than those who did not abuse alcohol to perpetrate IPV.^{16,17} Witnessing parental violence or being a victim of physical violence as a child has also been associated with men who perpetrate IPV.^{14,18,19} Women who were exposed to childhood violence and witnessed domestic violence are at higher risk of being victims.^{20,11}

Forms of Domestic Violence

Different forms of domestic violence or abuse a woman may be subjected to in the home include:

1. **Physical abuse:** This is the use of physical force in a way that injures the victim or puts him/her at risk of being injured. It includes beating, kicking, knocking, punching, choking, and confinement. Female genital mutilation is physical abuse. Physical abuse is one of the commonest forms of abuse. Obi & Ozumba (2007) found that 83% of respondents in their study reported physical abuse.
2. **Sexual abuse:** This includes all forms of sexual assaults, harassment or exploitation. It involves forcing a person to participate in sexual activity, using a child for sexual purposes including child prostitution and pornography. Marital rape also comes under this.
3. **Neglect:** This includes failure to provide for dependants who may be adults or children, denying family members food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and protection from harm or a sense of being loved and valued.
4. **Economic abuse:** This includes stealing from or defrauding a loved one, withholding money for essential things like food and medical treatment, manipulating or exploiting family member for financial gain, preventing a loved one from working or controlling his/her choice of occupation.
5. **Spiritual Abuse:** This includes preventing a person from engaging in his/her spiritual or religious practices or using one's religious belief to manipulate, dominate or control him/her
6. **Emotional Abuse:** This includes threatening a person or his or her possession or harming a person's sense of self-worth by putting him/her at risk of serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional or mental disorders. Shouting at a partner which was found to be the most common abuse by Obi and Ozunba (2007) is included. Also included in emotional abuse are name-calling, criticism, social isolation, intimidating or exploitation to dominate, routinely making unreasonable demand, terrorizing a person verbally or physically and exposing a child to violence

Theoretical Orientation

Social Learning Theory

The social learning theory developed by Bandura and Walters in 1963 places a strong emphasis on how imitation and observation shape behavior (Akers, 2011). According to the notion, people pick up behavioral patterns—including violent ones—from the people and surroundings they live in. This idea relates to domestic violence and contends that exposure to or witnessing violence as a child can raise one's risk of using aggressive behavior as an adult. The terms "cycle of violence" and "intergenerational transmission hypothesis" are frequently used to describe these phenomena.

Materials and Methods

Ethiope East is a local government area in Delta State, Nigeria. It is located in the center of the state, and is bordered by Ughelli North LGA to the north, Ughelli South LGA to the east, Ethiope West LGA to the south, and Uvwie LGA to the west. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey design in generating data to answer the research questions as well as test the hypotheses. The target population for the study was adults in aged 18 years and above. The choice of the target group is because of it is the legitimate age for one to be considered as adult in Nigeria and therefore can give required information on issues about domestic violence. A sample of 240 respondents was used for the study. The multi-stage sampling procedure and purposive technique were used in this study. Questionnaire was the major instrument for data collection in this study. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section "A" examined personal or demographic variables such as age, sex marital status, level of education, etc while section "B" focused on the main issues of the study. Data collected using the questionnaires were carefully edited to ensure completeness, consistency and accuracy. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences

(SPSS) was used for the analysis. Specifically, descriptive statistics such as percentages, the frequency tables were used in describing the respondents while Chi-square (χ^2), was used to test all hypotheses

Results

Table 1: *Distribution of the respondents by sex (N=209)*

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Males	82	39.2
Females	127	60.8
Place of residence		
Urban	77	36.8
Rural	132	63.2

Source: *Field work 2023*

Responses from Table 1 revealed that out of a total of 209 respondents used for the study, 39.2% were males while 60.8% were females. The result showed that majority of the respondents used in the study were females.

Table 2: *Distribution of the respondents by place of residence (N=209)*

Place of residence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Urban	77	36.8
Rural	132	63.2
Total	209	100.0

Source: *Fieldwork 2023*

The respondents were asked to indicate the location they are living at. 36.8% of the respondents indicated that they were living at urban area, and 63.2% stated rural area. Majority of the respondents used for the study were living in the rural area.

Table 3: *Distribution of respondents by their perception and engagement in domestic violence (N=209)*

Do you think people who perceive their partners as unfaithful engage in domestic violence in this community?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	123	58.9
No	86	41.1
Do people engage in domestic violence in this domestic violence in this area		
Yes	126	60.3
No	83	39.7

Source: *Survey, 2023*

Table above shows distribution of respondents on whether they think people who perceive their partners as unfaithful engage in domestic violence in this community. It shows that 58.9% of the respondents think people who perceive their partners as unfaithful engage in domestic violence in this community while 41.1% do not think people who perceive their partners as unfaithful engage in domestic violence in this community. The findings suggest that majority of the respondents' think people who perceive their partners as unfaithful engage in domestic violence in this community

A critical look at Table 3 shows that out of 209 respondents that were used in the study, 60.3% of the respondents indicated that people engage in domestic violence in this domestic violence their community, 39.7% mentioned that

people do not engage in domestic violence in this domestic violence in their community. The result of the findings showed that majority of the respondents indicated that people engage in domestic violence in this domestic violence

Table 4: Cross tabulation of sex and engagement in domestic violence

Place of residence	Engagement in domestic violence		Total
	Yes	No	
Urban area	19(24.7%)	58(75.3%)	77(100.0)
Rural area	78(59.1%)	54(40.9%)	132(100.0)
Total	97(46.4%)	112(53.6%)	209(100.0)

$\chi^2=23.160$, $df=1$, $N=209$, $p< .000$

Source: Survey, 2023

Table 4 is a cross tabulation of respondents' place of residence and engagement in domestic violence. The findings indicated that 24.7% of those who reside in urban area agreed that people who reside in urban areas are more likely to engage in domestic violence, 75.3% did not agree that people who reside in urban areas are more likely to engage in domestic violence. However, 59.1% of those who live in rural areas accepted that people who reside in urban areas are more likely to engage in domestic violence while 40.9% of them does not accept that people who reside in urban areas are more likely to engage in domestic violence.

Rejection Region: If $p \leq .05$ reject the null hypothesis (H_0), but if $p > .05$, we accept the null hypothesis. The test is a one-tailed test.

With the computed $\chi^2= 23.160$; $df=1$, the test shows that there was a statistically significant relationship ($p<.000$) between place of residence and engagement in domestic violence. The substantive hypothesis which states that people who reside in urban areas are more likely to engage in domestic violence than those who reside in rural areas is valid and therefore upheld. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no relationship between place of residence and engagement in domestic violence is hereby rejected.

Table 5: Cross tabulation of Sex and Perception of Partner as Unfaithful

Sex	Perception of partner as unfaithful		Total
	Yes	No	
Males	58(70.7%)	24(29.3%)	82(100.0)
Females	65(51.2%)	62(48.8%)	127(100.0)
Total	123(58.9%)	86(41.1%)	209(100.0)

$\chi^2=7.865$, $df=1$, $N=209$, $p< .005$

Source: Survey, 2018

Table 5 is a cross tabulation of respondents' sex and perception of partner as unfaithful. A critical look at Table 4 shows 70.7% of the males agreed that males who perceived their wives as unfaithful are more likely to engage in domestic violence and 29.3% did not agree that males who perceived their wives as unfaithful are more likely to engage in domestic violence. On the other hand, 51.2% of the female respondents agreed that males who perceived their wives as unfaithful are more likely to engage in domestic violence and 48.8% do not agree that males who perceived their wives as unfaithful are more likely to engage in domestic violence

Rejection Region: If $p \leq .05$ reject the null hypothesis (H_0), but if $p > .05$, we accept the null hypothesis. The test is a one-tailed test.

With the computed $\chi^2= 7.865$; $df=1$, the test shows that there was a statistically significant relationship ($p<.005$) between sex and perception of partner as unfaithful. Therefore, the substantive hypothesis which states that males who perceive their wives as unfaithful are more likely to engage in domestic violence against wives than males who do not perceive it as such is valid and therefore upheld. In other words, perception of partner as unfaithful is influenced by sex. The null hypothesis which states that there is no relationship between sex and perception of partner as unfaithful is hereby rejected.

Discussion

The study shows that there was a statistically significant relationship ($p < .005$) between sex and perception of partner as unfaithful. This finding corroborates with Nwafor (2018) who found a significant effect for unfaithfulness in marriage at $F(1,203) = 13.539$, $< P.05$ level of significance, with couples high on unfaithfulness in marriage measures having more tendency to domestic violence than couples low on unfaithfulness in marriage measures. Domestic violence is widely recognized as a major social and psychological problem. Although it is mostly perpetrated by a male against a female, the reverse could be the case on occasional basis; men are also victims. The fact remains that women are the highest victims of domestic violence, particularly in Nigeria. About 10% of women are assaulted by their husbands while 7% are assaulted regularly, yet only 1% report to the police (WHO, 2011). Observation showed that some police divisions in Nigeria hardly allow officers to arrest couples because of domestic conflicts. In Nigeria, domestic violence is seen to be a family affair and should be treated as such (Adewale, 2007). This state of affair has definitely affected the maintenance of adequate statistics on cases of domestic violence in Nigeria.

Secondly, the study also indicated significant relationship ($p < .000$) between place of residence and engagement in domestic violence. This finding is in line with Johnbull and Ikiriko (2024) whose study revealed a significant disparity in domestic violence rates between planned and unplanned neighborhoods. Within planned neighborhoods, emotional violence is the most prevalent type (72.1%). In contrast, unplanned neighborhoods exhibit significantly higher rates of reported domestic violence (72.50%) compared to planned neighborhoods (27.50%), with physical violence emerging as the most prevalent form (64.3%). Also, Ajah, Iyoke, Nkwo, Nwakoby and Ezeonu (2013) found prevalence of domestic violence among rural women was significantly higher than that among urban women (97% versus 81%, $P < 0.001$). In particular, the prevalence of physical violence was significantly higher among rural women than among urban women (37.2% versus 23.5%; $P = 0.05$). In contrast, rural and urban women did not differ significantly in the proportions that had experienced psychological or sexual violence. The proportion of women who believed that domestic violence was excusable was significantly higher among rural dwellers than among urban dwellers (58.5% versus 29.6%; $P = 0.03$).

In conclusion, the study demonstrated that domestic violence was influenced by place of residence prevalent in the urban slum community. More rural women than urban women were likely to excuse domestic violence. This could be due to the fact that urban women were more likely to be educated and economically empowered than their rural counterparts. Although domestic violence is mostly perpetrated by a male against a female, the reverse could be the case on occasional basis; men are also victims. The fact remains that women are the highest victims of domestic violence, particularly in Nigeria. There is a need to bring change in behaviour regarding the same in the community.

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