In the first section of this paper, the author briefly discussed the prevalence of violence against women, which is as old as time itself and is pervasively perpetrated by men on women worldwide, regardless of their sociocultural, political, religious, or economic status. No nation in the world is immune to it. Nonetheless, severity varies. In contrast to developed nations, women in African nations are more likely to be abused. It is shockingly accepted and considered normal in this region of the world. The lack of data from victims is one of the greatest obstacles to assessing the full impact of gender-based violence in African societies. When this information is available, it is not always sufficient.

Using the ecological model, the author attempts to classify the various forms of violence into four major categories, including physical, economic, psychological/emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as the factors responsible for them, including individual, relationship, community, and societal factors. On both the individual and societal levels, the negative consequences of violence were emphasized, and appropriate recommendations were made.

Keywords: Gender-based violence, forms, factors, consequences and prevention of violence, Nigeria, Africa.
Introduction

The unexpected death of Mrs. Osinachi Nwachukwu, a Nigerian gospel singer whose husband beat her to death, was shocking to many. Because, as depicted by this heinous incident, even when the woman follows all the rules of her "owner" (the patriarch) and her religious tenets, she is still not safe in the one place and with the one person she should be and feel the safest. According to Khan, the former director of UNICEF, women and children are frequently in grave danger where they should be safest: in their own homes. The director continued by stating that for many, "home" is a place where they are subjected to a regime of terror and violence at the hands of someone, they should be able to trust (Kapoor, 2000). According to the report, Mrs. Osinachi Nwachukwu, a Christian religious singer who exemplified the so-called religious and cultural norms, had been physically abused by her husband for years. Her reluctance to leave was due to her belief that her prayers would one day change him and her fear of what others would think of her as a Christian woman. Many believed that her abuse was a result of her husband's low self-esteem, given that his wife's musical talents would have allowed her to earn significantly more than him. At the time of writing this review, her death is still a topic of national debate in Nigeria, with one argument being that her success and fame posed a threat to her husband's masculinity (Alao, 2022; Punch, 2022; Abdulkareem, 2022; Ochogwu, 2022; Yinka, 2022; Insansa, 2022; Alieke, 2022).

Domestic violence causes one-fourth of serious physical assaults on women and nearly one-third of all female homicides (Noughani and Mohtashami, 2011, p.80), with Africa being the region where women are most likely to be murdered by their intimate partner or family member. In 2017, intimate partner violence killed more than two-thirds (69 percent) of all women in Africa (UNODC, 2018, pp.10-11). In Nigeria, violence against women is widely accepted. This impacts the rate at which people speak out and report incidents of violence, making it difficult to obtain accurate data on the number of women who die from intimate or non-intimate partner abuse.

For instance, Section 55 of the Penal Code, what? states that so long as a husband does not inflict "grievous" harm on his wife for the purpose of correction, he is not considered to have committed a crime. (Nwankwo, 2008 p.3; Etuk et al., 2013, p.27). Odimegwu (2001), cited by Otufale (2013, p. 3), added that the Penal Code Law 89 Laws of Northern Nigeria (1969) states that domestic quarrels are not a crime if they are committed by a husband for the purpose of correcting his wife.
Otufale continued by stating that this law compares the husband-wife relationship to the parent-child relationship. In addition to condoning violence against women, Nigeria also accepts violence against children. This is supported by Aihie's (2009) assertion that traditional African culture accepts wife beating and harsh child discipline as normal (p.5). Norms, values, and sociocultural and religiously held beliefs perpetuate a cycle of women's perpetual victimization. Not only do they end in the homes where they are perpetuated, but they also frequently give rise to violent societies (ibid).

The Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence Worldwide

The Penal Code Law 89 Laws of Northern Nigeria (1969), as cited by Odimegwu (2001), states that domestic quarrels are not a crime if committed by a husband for the purpose of correcting his wife. Otufale went on to say that under this law, the husband-wife relationship is analogous to the parent-child relationship. This means that Nigeria not only condones violence against women but also accepts violence against children. Traditional African culture, according to Aihie (2009), accepts wife beating and harsh child discipline as normal (pp.3-5). Norms, values, and sociocultural and religious beliefs perpetuate a cycle of perpetual victimization for women. The effect of these acts does not only end in the homes where they are perpetuated, but they frequently give rise to violent societies as well (ibid).

In a developed country like the United States of America, women are victims of approximately 4.8 million intimate partner-related physical assaults and rapes each year, while men are victims of approximately 2.9 million (Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000). Domestic abuse affects 1.6 million women and 757,000 men in the United Kingdom in 2019 (ONS, 2020), while 43.3 percent of women in developing countries reported physical abuse, according to a study in India (ICRW, 2000, p.9). Intimate partner violence (IPV) is prevalent in South Africa, with 20% to 50% of women experiencing violence at some point in their lives (Sere et al., 2001). In Ghana, the prevalence of intimate partner violence is high, with 43 percent of women with partners or spouses reporting experiencing at least one type of IPV in the previous year (ISSER et al., 2019, p.18). According to Cordon et al., (2018), data from the Ethiopia 2016 Demographic Health Survey (DHS) revealed that 33 percent of women aged 15–49 had ever experienced physical or sexual violence and that domestic violence, circumcision, and child marriage are still a significant
problem in Ethiopia. According to a 2016 survey by Project Alert and NOIPolls, fifty percent of Nigerian women experienced domestic violence alone. Approximately ninety-seven percent of these women do not report this crime to the police because they believe the law will not protect them. They remain in this abusive relationship where they die in silence. (pp.4-5).

While efforts to reduce violence against women are ongoing in developed countries, gender-based violence remains widely accepted as normal in developing countries, and the number of women killed by violence perpetrated primarily by men will continue to rise unless concerted efforts are made to mitigate violations of women's fundamental human rights by effectively making and enforcing laws at both the international and local levels.

**GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE DEFINED**

Researchers use a variety of criteria to define violence, and these criteria depend not only on the type of violence that occurs but also on the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator (WHO, 2005, p.13). As an example of a definition of violence based on the nature of the relationship between the victim and perpetrator, Ishrat and Abdul (2016) define violence as a destructive behavior in an intimate relationship where one person attempts to dominate and control the other in a dating, married, or cohabiting relationship, resulting in physical, psychological, or sexual harm. For the purposes of this article, however, I will employ the United Nations' 1993 adopted definition of "violence against women" (VAW). According to this definition, violence against women is "any act of gender-based violence (GBV) that causes or is likely to cause physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (WHO, 2019). This definition is exhaustive in that it considers not only the effects, but also the causes and manifestations of various forms of gender-based violence, based on their types or relationships.

**FORMS OF VIOLENCE**

Violence against intimate partners can take many forms. Because a violent act can result in multiple types of violence, some more conspicuous than others, these forms are interrelated. Some authors have divided them into four categories, including the most prevalent, physical abuse, and
psychological/emotional abuse, which can result from physical, sexual, and/or economic abuse which are all types of violence.

Because psychological abuse affects the emotional equilibrium of the victim, some authors, including Isaboke (2019), Ogunkorode (2018), and Kingdom and Udoh (2018), have grouped psychological and emotional abuse together. While Florence and Bukaliya (2015) categorized verbal abuse as a distinct type of abuse, Ishrat and Abdul (2016) defined it as the continuous put-down and public or private humiliation of a person. However, Calub (2015) classified verbal abuse as a form of psychological/emotional abuse.

Kingdom and Udoh (2018) went on to distinguish another type of abuse they termed "family abuse," which is a more inclusive term for violence between family members and intimate partners. It has the same characteristics as domestic violence. In this study, I focused on the four most prevalent forms of abuse because other forms of abuse can be easily categorized under one of the four.

1. **Physical Abuse:**

   This is one of the most prevalent forms of abuse (Ogunkorode, 2018, p.172; Oluremi, 2015, p.26), in part due to the fact that it is the most obvious form of violence against women. Physical abuse is the use of physical force that results in injury or places the victim at risk of injury (Ishola, 2016, p.6). Physical violence against women includes slapping or throwing something that could hurt her, pushing or shoving her, hitting her with a fist or something else that could hurt her, kicking, dragging, or beating her up, choking or intentionally burning her, and threatening to use or actually using a gun, knife, or other weapon against her (WHO 2005, p.14).

2. **Economic Abuse:**

   This form of abuse involves withholding financial support and exercising strict control over the family's economic resources, such as money and transportation (Slabbert and Green, 2014, p.240). In order for this type of abuse to be effective, the abusive partner willfully keeps the victim dependent on them for survival. Typically, the victim's heavy dependence on the abuser makes it impossible for them to leave the violent relationship. According to Ndong (2013, p.9), it consists
of denying the victim funds, refusing to contribute financially to the household, denying food and basic needs, and controlling access to health care, employment, etc.

3. **Psychological/Emotional Abuse:**

This refers to any behavior that consistently demeans, intimidates, and humiliates a partner (Krug et al. 2002, p.89). This particular type of violence is covert and manipulative in nature, and it frequently co-occurs with other forms of intimate partner violence. Research suggests that it often precedes physical and sexual violence in violent relationships (CDC, 2015, p.15). According to Calub (2015, pp.2-3), they are of two types which includes: verbal and social abuse.

   a. **Verbal abuse.** This is the repeated demeaning and humiliation of an individual, either in private or in public. It includes yelling, screaming, insults, name-calling, sarcasm, and ridiculing her for her religious or ethnic beliefs (Florence and Bukaliya, 2015, p.63, Ishrat and Abdul, 2016).

   b. **Social/Non-verbal Abuse.** Any behavior that results in the isolation and alienation of a woman from her friends and family, or any actions that imply she is inferior because of her gender or socioeconomic status (e.g., controlling what she does, whom she sees and talks to, treating her like a servant, making a scene in public, etc.) Calub (2015, p.3).

4. **Sexual Abuse:** This includes all forms of sexual assault, exploitation, and harassment. It involves forcing a person to engage in sexual activity (Aihie, 2009, p.4; Oluremi, 2015, p.26), with or without their volitional consent (CDC, 2015, p.11), by an intimate or non-intimate partner (Kingdom and Udoh 2018, pp.32-33). In a married or intimate relationship, sexual abuse occurs when a man believes he has control over a woman's body and has sex with her at will, sometimes against her consent. Occasionally, her life is threatened if she refuses. This is considered to be marital rape (Slabbert and Green, 2014, p.240; Ishola, 2016, p.7). In certain nations, such as Nigeria, marital rape is not a crime (Nwankwo, 2008, p.3).
FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The ecological model is the most prevalent model for comprehending the interplay of personal, situational, and sociocultural factors that contribute to gender-based violence (Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, 2003; WHO, 2012, p.4). This is due to the multifaceted nature of violence against women and girls (World Bank Group, 2019). According to this model, violence against women results from the interaction of factors at various levels of the social environment, including the individual, the relationship, the community, and the society. It argues that several factors at each of these levels, while not the sole cause, can increase the likelihood of gender-based violence, and the greater the number of risk factors, the greater the likelihood of violence (Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, 2003).

Individual and Interpersonal Factors

Individual ecological framework aids in comprehending how individual and interpersonal factors influence gender violence in societies where norms and social actors disapprove of such acts through various forms of punishment, but individuals continue to commit such crimes. The perpetrator of domestic violence at this level has typically been abused or witnessed domestic violence as a child, has an absent or rejecting father, and engages in heavy alcohol consumption (Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, 2003). Children who witness or experience abuse have a tendency to imitate the behavior and perpetuate the cycle (Duvvury et al., 2013, p.12). Because children are emotionally and practically dependent on their parents, they tend to imitate parental roles and behavior. Consequently, they may have difficulty establishing affective relationships distinct from those they experienced in childhood. Thus, children raised in such homes are more likely to become violent men and battered women, and may have a higher tolerance for social and political violence (Rico, 1997, p.26). This is supported by Kabeer (2014, p.10), who states that childhood experiences are one of the most reliable predictors of intimate partner violence across a variety of countries. She went on to explain that what children witness or experience in their formative years significantly influences the type of adults they become and the extent to which they view intimate violence as "normal" or even acceptable. Individual risk factors include low self-esteem, low income, low academic achievement, aggression or delinquent behavior as a youth, heavy alcohol and drug use, antisocial or borderline personality traits, unemployment, a history of
physical or psychological abuse, depression, anger and hostility, poor company, emotional dependence and insecurity, etc (Ishrat and Abdul, 2016, p.1699).

**Relationship Factors**

Cross-cultural studies have cited male control of wealth and decision-making within the family and marital conflict as strong predictors of abuse at the family and relationship level (Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, 2003). According to Kabeer (2014, p.12), the nature of the relationship between intimate partners can also make a difference, with higher levels of violence associated with cohabitation than with formal unions, polygamous rather than monogamous marriages, and the payment of dowry in societies where these practices are prevalent. In communities where men are accustomed to and expected to be the primary breadwinners, improvements in women's economic status through work, credit, or property will likely challenge prevailing gender norms and threaten men's sense of self-worth. Economic stress, unhealthy family relationships and interactions, marital instability (divorces or separations), marital conflict and fights, one partner being more dominant and in control of the relationship than the other, etc., can all put a relationship in jeopardy (Ishrat and Abdul, 2016, p.1699).

**Community Factors**

Nigeria is a culturally lagging society with pervasive values, beliefs, customs, and norms that continue to exert considerable influence and sway over their national lives. The term "cultural lag" refers to the notion that culture lags behind technological advancements, causing social problems and conflicts (Kariuki and Kelele 2018 p.147). According to Abayomi and Olabode (2013, p.57), traditional practices in Nigeria hold that the man is the head of the household and has complete authority over household decision-making. According to studies, the prevalence of violence against women is higher in societies and communities where ideas about manhood are associated with dominance and aggression, where men control family wealth, where family decision-making structures are highly patriarchal, and where women face divorce restrictions (Kabeer 2014, p.13). Women's social isolation and lack of social support, coupled with male peer groups that condone and legitimize men's violence, predict higher community-level rates of violence (Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, 2003). According to Krug et al. (2002, p.99), a community's response to partner violence may influence the prevalence of abuse in the community as a whole.
They asserted that the societies with the lowest rates of partner violence were those with community sanctions against partner violence and where abused women had access to shelters or family support.

**Societal Factors**

According to Ishrat and Abdul (2016, p.1699), traditional gender norms are societal factors (e.g., women should stay at home, not enter the workplace, and be submissive, while men support the family and make decisions). Societies with extremely rigid models of gender roles and the division of labor, frequently supported by strict controls over women's sexuality and reproductive capacity, tend to have higher rates of violence (Kabeer, 2014, p.13). According to UN Women (2015), cited in Olojede et al., 2020 (p.73), the societal-level factors of unequal distribution of power and resources between men and women, gender-based discrimination, and inequality are evident in Nigerian society, such as discriminatory laws, unequal access to political and economic power, socially constructed norms of masculinity and femininity, and gender roles and stereotypes. Abayomi and Olabode (2013, p. 57–58) explained that in Nigeria, the perception of more than 250 highly patriarchal ethnic groups regarding violence against women determines its acceptability and perpetuation within these groups. They added that the notion of women's subjugation to gender-exclusive roles is so ingrained in society that everyone tends to accept violence against women as justified. Globally, violence against women is most prevalent in societies where gender roles are rigidly defined and enforced and where the concept of masculinity is associated with toughness, male honor, or dominance. Other cultural norms associated with abuse include the acceptance of physical punishment of women and children, the acceptance of violence as a means to resolve interpersonal conflicts, and the perception that men "own" women. This is exacerbated by the practice of bride price, which, according to Abayomi and Olabode (2013, p.57), has led to the concept of female ownership, as the exchange of bride price demonstrates a commercial transaction. At the social level, there are norms that give men control over how women behave, the acceptance of violence as a problem-solving technique, the belief that being a man means being dominant, honorable, and violent, and rigid gender roles (Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, 2003).
Consequences of Gender-Based Violence

These effects, in whatever form they take, make it difficult for women to meaningfully participate in and contribute to their country's development. According to Rico (1997, p.26), violence against women prevents them from participating in decision-making in the home, at work, and in the political, economic, and social spheres, and thus directly influences their participation in public activities and, thus, the exercise of their citizenship.

The consequences and effects of the various forms and factors responsible for the prevalence and perpetuation of abuse against women are of varying degree and magnitude, which are either difficult or easy to detect and diagnose, depending on the nature of the particular incident, the type of relationship the woman has with her abuser, and the context in which the incident occurred (Club, 2015, p.3), and it can have serious short-term, long-term, and widespread effects on the victims. For instance, the effects of emotional abuse on the victim are typically longer-lasting, more difficult to diagnose, and more challenging to treat than the physical effects and symptoms. The readily observable physical effects include injuries, pain, disability, nausea, chronic health issues, vomiting, headaches, sexual and reproductive health issues, and extreme outcomes such as homicide, maternal mortality, and infant mortality (Population Council, 2008; Calub, 2015, p.4; Monsoni, 2006). According to Mshelia (2021, p.677), the physical impact of abuse on women is a major cause of female morbidity and mortality.

Behavioural manifestations and psychological effects resulting from covert forms and factors of abuse may include eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep disturbances, fear, inability to concentrate, substance abuse, loneliness, suicide, and changes in normal day-to-day functioning (ibid), which are difficult to detect and manage. It may also result in depression and self-destructive behavior, anger and hostility, low self-esteem, feelings of isolation and stigma, difficulty trusting others (especially men), marital and relationship difficulties, and a propensity for re-victimization (Ishola, 2016, p.13).

The social impact of abuse on women and girls can be detrimental to their self-esteem and social functioning. It prevents them from acquiring income-generating skills or an education, which further diminishes their sense of self-worth and future earning potential, resulting in poverty, which creates a stressful environment that contributes to more violence against them (Jekwes, 2002,
The social rejection faced by women in cultures that blame, shame, and force the victims to remain silent over abusive relationships causes emotional damage such as shame, self-hatred, and depression (Abayomi and Olabode, 2013, p.57; Monsoni, 2006), which further isolates her from fully participating politically, economically, and socially in society.

In addition, as a social effect of GBV, a child who has experienced or witnessed abuse by his parents is more likely to feel stigmatized, which hinders their ability to adequately function in society, and they frequently perpetuate such acts against their peers or, over time, their partners, either by accepting abuse as normal (especially for the girl child) or by being abusive themselves. Thus, the social effect of gender abuse contributes significantly to the development of a violent society and a generation of abusers (Ishola, 2016, p. 13; Oyediran and Abanihe, 2005, pp.48–50).

The economic impact of abuse impoverishes the woman as a result of losses in earning potential caused by job loss; inability to find employment, sometimes due to a variety of interference tactics used by their partners to undermine their ability to maintain regular employment; loss of savings as a result of victims spending their money on medical costs; and loss of productive time due to absenteeism (Otufale, 2013, pp.8–10; Duvvury et al., 2013, pp.10-11). Economic abuse may result in fatal outcomes such as homicide, maternal and infant mortality as a result of the woman's inability to become financially independent and leave the violent relationship (Sanders 2007, cited in Weaver et al. 2009, p.571) and her lack of financial resources to care for her health.

**Recommendations**

In the majority of societies, particularly in developing nations such as Nigeria, violence against women is enabled by cultural norms that prevent women from speaking out, obtaining assistance, and sometimes even condoning their abuse. Consequently, the governments of these nations must implement a massive public sensitization and reorientation program to educate their citizens on the negative effects of GBV, encourage victims to speak out, and provide them with the necessary support to leave abusive relationships. In addition, it must recognize the fundamental human rights of women, abolish customary laws and traditional and religious practices that discriminate against women and promote violence against them, and end all forms of gender-based discrimination.
To achieve socioeconomic development, developing nations must ensure that women, who constitute more than half of their population, have equal rights and access to opportunities, free from gender stereotypes and cultural barriers that encourage their reliance on men.

Violence against women has existed since the beginning of time, so it is only natural that international and national organizations are proliferating to alleviate the problem and find a permanent solution. To ensure the efficacy of the various initiatives and programs aimed at empowering women and liberating them from abuse, these organizations must also educate men, who are the primary perpetrators of violence, on the necessity of accepting change and employing alternative conflict resolution techniques when interacting with women.

**Conclusion**

While studies indicate that both men and women are affected by gender-based violence, the majority of people who have experienced intimate or non-intimate partner violence are women. The occurrence of one type of violence often precedes the occurrence of another, and they can occur simultaneously (Krug et al., 2002 p.91). They are caused by numerous factors, including individual factors, relationship factors, community factors, and societal factors, with varying degrees of severity depending on the nature and type of the victim's relationship. The government has a significant role to play in resolving this issue, but due to a lack of political will in most developing nations as a result of their cultural beliefs, individuals and organizations must take on this onus task.

**Reference**


