
INFLUENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON NURSING MOTHERS IN BENUE STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR GUIDANCE

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Abstract

The study investigated the Influence of Domestic Violence on Nursing Mothers in Benue State. The research design was a descriptive survey. A total of 27,497 nursing mothers from Benue state made up the study population. Based on the formula of Glenn (2012) table of sample specification, a sample of 394 was used. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled; Domestic Violence on Nursing Mothers Questionnaire (DVNMQ). The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis based on the research questions and null hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested using t-test. The study concludes that Factors such as persistent argument between spouse, husband and wife fighting and physical attack on nursing mothers contributed majorly to domestic violence against nursing mothers in Benue State, Nigeria. Findings from the study showed that domestic violence in Benue State takes forms of physical attack on nursing mothers, abusing nursing mothers verbally and harassed sexually. The study shows that urban and rural nursing mothers did not differ significantly in the dominant forms of domestic violence. The findings of the study further revealed that there is no significant difference between urban and rural nursing mothers in the perceived role of the victims of domestic violence in Benue State, Nigeria. The study recommended that all the stakeholders through Benue state ministry of health should be organising seminars and orientations for spouses on the danger of domestic violence and how to avoid it.

Key words: Domestic Violence, Nursing Mother and Guidance

Introduction

Domestic violence on women is a global issue, with no regard to caste, creed, color, social status, wealth, urban or rural residence, or the ages of victim. The dangers women face especially nursing mothers are often seen as the outcome of social inequality between them and men especially in African society steeped in patriarchy. It is logical to expect that the low status of women in one-way or the other impacts on their susceptibility to violence. Unlike the developed countries where a good number of studies on violence against women have been conducted with the aim of having better knowledge of the implications of violence on women, the same may not be true for developing countries like Nigeria and Benue state in particular.

Often when we hear of domestic violence on women, the most common questions that we ask are “Why does she stay on?” “Why doesn’t she leave?” Facing the incredible danger of intimate partner violence, the question is not ‘why women do not leave their abuser’, but instead ‘how do women who are in abusive relationships find the courage to leave’ and ‘how will they sustain themselves once they leave? Based on the researcher’s profession, which makes him have encounter with so many abused women, he has come to understand that separation is a complex process and cannot be confined just to the “stay/leave construct”. One needs to see the decisions of the women in staying and leaving as a process rather than a single act. Furthermore, one must recognize leaving as a choice rather than as a better way out. Some women leave and return a few times before permanently ending the abusive relationship.

Domestic violence affects men and women of all ages, races, religions, and incomes. This problem is as old as humanity itself. However, due to the secrecy of domestic violence, it is often a hidden social problem. The invisibility of the problem is largely attributed to the belief that it is a private family matter, which should not be made known to outsiders. According to Yogo (2008), violence in the home has been part of human history and human societies have lived with it without feeling that it was anything wrong. This problem is a global issue and humanity has lived with it for so many centuries. In fact, it was even seen at some point as a normal way of life.

The researcher observed that the practice of wife battering is prevalent in Benue state, Nigeria. It is very injurious to nursing mothers’ health and it cuts across socio-economic classes though it may be more prevalent among the lower classes. Some of these health consequences are violence-related injuries, psychological, miscarriage, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) including Human Immune Deficiency Virus (HIV), pelvic inflammatory disease, chronic pelvic pain, headaches, permanent disabilities, haemorrhage and sterility resulting from female genital mutilation FGM. There is need to look at different perceptions of violence against women by males, females, educated and uneducated people. The researcher also observed that violation of women at home has made women situation difficult to participate fully in issues concerning them in the home and in the society. As such, women have no freedom to speak for themselves because of the fear of punishment from their husbands. Men think women are meant for giving birth, taking care of the children and carrying out other domestic works.

One of the researchers being a Priest, have offered pastoral counselling to women who have faced violence in marriages. He has also seen close friends and relatives being beaten by their husbands. Almost on a daily bases; the researcher meets women who are beaten by their husbands or being psychologically or sexually abused by the men who had

professed to love them. The researcher often wondered why abused women remain in abusive relationships. Why do they not leave? As many women as the researchers met, they have come to realize that it is not easy to just leave due to the complexity of the emotions involved in a relationship. Women who choose leaving the marital home as a preferred way of living a violence-free life are not making an easy choice. All the above spurred the researchers' interest to examine the influence of domestic violence on nursing mothers in Benue State: Implications for Guidance.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims at investigating the influence of domestic violence on nursing mothers in Benue State: Implications for Guidance. The specific objectives are to:

- i. examine the factors responsible for domestic violence against nursing mothers in Benue State.
- ii. ascertain the influence of domestic violence on nursing mothers in Benue State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the conduct of this study:

1. What are the factors responsible for domestic violence against nursing mothers in Benue State?
2. What is the influence of domestic violence on nursing mothers in Benue State?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- H₀₁:** There is no significant difference between the mean score of urban and rural women on the factors responsible for domestic violence against nursing mothers in Benue State.
- H₀₂:** There is no significant difference between the mean score of urban and rural women on the influence of domestic violence against nursing mothers in Benue State.

Conceptual Framework

Concepts used in this study are defined as followed;

Domestic Violence Against Women

Domestic violence on women is the range of sexually, psychologically and physically coercive acts used against women by current or former male intimate partners. Whilst women, men, boys and girls can be victims of domestic violence; women and girls are disproportionately affected (Yogo, 2008). Furthermore, the UN General Assembly, declaration on the elimination of violence against women defined gender-based violence as any act of violence that results in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering of women; including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (Population Reference Bureau, 2000).

In the same vein, violence against women is defined as a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women which has led to domination over and

discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women (United Nation General Assembly Resolution, 2007). Violence against women continues to be global epidemic that kills, tortures and maims physically, psychological, sexually and emotionally. It is one of the most pervasive of human rights violation that denies women of their security, equality, dignity, self-worth and right to enjoy fundamental freedom. Violence against women is present in most countries in the world cutting across boundaries of culture, class, education, income, ethnicity and age (Yogo, 2008). The above definitions have agreed on one fact, that domestic violence against women involves a wide range of events that can lead to the discomfort of women at home and make life unbearable.

The expression “violence against women” can mean many different things and many different terms are used to describe it. Common terms include domestic violence, physical abuse, sexual violence, rape, sexual assault and harassment. According to Flood and Pease (2006), each term excludes some forms of violence and is subject to shifts in meaning and also has different cultural interpretations. For example, the concept of rape within marriage may not exist within certain cultures and therefore would not fall within the scope of domestic violence for some people. The causes of gender-based violence are many and varied depending on the types of violence. Traditional attitudes towards women around the world help perpetuate the violence. Stereotypical roles in which women are seen as subordinate to men constrain a woman’s ability to exercise choices that would enable her end the abuse. Flood and Pease (2006) further added that poverty and financial insecurity are among the causes of gender-based violence. If a man cannot establish his authority intellectually or economically, he would tend to do so physically. Another cause might be the image created by the society, which portrays a man, as being strong, educated, creative, and clever while a woman is the opposite of all these traits.

Domestic violence (DV) also called dating violence, intimate partner abuse, spousal abuse, intimate partner violence (IPV), and domestic abuse takes many forms. Maltreatment that takes place in the context of any romantic relationship is abuse as described by the above specific terms. It, therefore, affects men, women, or teen girls and boys, whether in a married or unmarried heterosexual or homosexual relationship. Intimate partner violence may consist of one or more forms, including emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, or economic abuse, and is defined as one person in an intimate relationship using any means to put down or otherwise control the other (Oguche, Daniels & Zubairu, 2022).

The word ‘domestic’ is derived from the Latin word ‘domus’ meaning a ‘home’. Domestic (Domesticus in Latin connotes what happens in and around a family dwelling place) (Tony, 2002). Violence is the use of coercive forms of power: the use of force or the threat of its use to compel someone to do something that the person might not otherwise do. It is part of a continuum ranging from legitimate power (a person does something because it is right to do so) through utilitarian power (a person does something because of a reward for doing so) to coercive power (Tony, 2002). Violence has been defined in many ways. The World Health Organization (2002) defines violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal- development or deprivation.

According to Jones (2004), violence is any act that causes the victim to do something they do not want to do, prevent them from doing something they want to do or causes them to be afraid. Hence violence need not involve physical contact with the victim, but verbal threats and psychological abuse can be equally destructive. Violence is any destructive behaviour,

which is geared towards hurting another person. Domestic abuse or violence is the physical, sexual, verbal and emotional abuse, which occurs within the home. Domestic violence is a form of gender violence, which relates more to issues of power than sexuality. It has been known for some time that rape or sexual assault is not related to sexuality; it is related to dominance and an apparent need to humiliate the person being attacked. Similarly, battering as part of domestic violence is also at its heart; an effort to assert dominance or to re-assert a self-image based on dominance (Rhodes & Levison, 2003).

Akpan and Usoroh, (2005) defines domestic violence as violence in intimacy which can be physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or threats of physical or sexual violence that are inflicted on women. Violence directed against women is found in many societies.

Forms of Domestic Violence.

The manifestations of the social malady of domestic violence, include:

1. **Physical Abuse:** This is the use of physical force in a way that injures the victim or puts him or her at the risk of being injured. It includes beating, kicking, knocking, pushing, choking, confinement and female genital mutilation. Physical abuse is one of the most common forms of domestic violence.
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 dependents 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. **Self-harm:** Aggression towards self as in self-blame, self-harm and suicide are common consequences of sexual abuse. Adikwu, Oguche, Usman and Olabode (2023) found participants sexually abused in childhood were more than twice as likely to consider committing suicide in later life.
7. **Emotional Abuse:** This includes threatening a person 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 & 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 physically and exposing a child to violence.
8. **Psychological abuse:** Which includes behaviour that is intended to intimidate and persecute, and takes the form of threats of abandonment or abuse, confinement to the home, surveillance, threats to take away custody of the children, destruction of objects, isolation, verbal aggression and constant humiliation.

Factors Responsible for Domestic Violence

Although there is no specific cause for domestic violence, women at the highest risk for being the victim of domestic violence include those with male partners who abuse drugs (especially alcohol), are unemployed or underemployed, afflicted by poverty, have not graduated from high school, and are or have been in a romantic relationship with the victim. The concept of “patriarchy” as an ideology that fosters a set of beliefs, which justify male domination over women in society. Patriarchal societies are more likely to have sharply delineated sex roles and while patriarchal beliefs exist in all societies to some degree, patriarchal beliefs are less likely to be found in western societies due to increased autonomy of women and increased access to education and employment. Ahmad, Riaz, Barata and Stewart (2004).

However, as noted by Ahmad et al, (2004) women from patriarchal societies may themselves accept and adhere to patriarchal norms and values. They observed that South Asian women who adhered to more patriarchal values were less likely to judge spousal physical abuse as domestic violence compared with those women who disagreed with patriarchal social norms. In view of the above, it should be expected that women who accept patriarchal norms and values, are less likely to define behaviours as violence against women, less likely to judge such behaviours as serious, less likely to report such behaviour to others and indeed less likely to define themselves as victims. Violence against women focuses on the belief system prevalent in relationships between men and women, where the male believes that he is entitled to be superior to the woman. Thus, he is willing to control and coerce the female by a variety of means, including violence, in order to maintain that authority. Hampton, Jenkins and Gullota (2006) maintain that gender-based analysis holds men accountable for stopping their own violent behaviours. Moreover, it recognizes the ways in which women are under-valued and have been conditioned via the female role belief system to believe in their own inferiority in relationship to men.

Gender violence as a reflection of the societal view of violence and a natural phenomenon that is based on a biological and determinist model in which the „strong” dominate the “weak” (Duarte, 2004). In a patriarchal society like ours, women are regarded as the “weaker sex” and their main role is to “reproduce”. According to Gouldner and Gouldner (2003), the issue of violence against women will always be a problem for as long as society accepts the over valuation of the masculine gender and tolerates violence. They went further to state that according to the Covenant on the Rights of the Child (CRC), FGM violates the rights of the child and is associated with poverty, illiteracy and low status of women. A constraint that presents itself in the pursuit of the goals of eliminating all forms of violence against women is the influence of culture. Experience has shown that culture has a role to play when talking about violence against women but one important thing we have to understand is that culture is not static but dynamic. The influence of our culture has affected women’s responses to violence against them. Even when they feel aggrieved at having been dehumanized, they choose to live with the situation rather than opt not to tolerate it.

Greenblatt (2005) opines that culturally sanctioned beliefs about the rights and privileges of husbands have historically legitimized a man’s domination over his wife and warranted his use of violence to control her. Men in general, are more accepting of men abusing women, and the most culturally traditional men are the most accepting. Dobash and Dobash (2009), Adams (2007) are of the opinion that batterers often excuse their violence by pointing to their wives “unwifely” behaviour as their justification.

Generally, the domestic violence has been identified as an overwhelming factor affecting children in Nigeria. It would appear, then that, domestic violence may present a very serious danger to the emotional, personality and mental adjustment of the young adolescent and this impinges on the family wellbeing. The tragedy of marriages in all ramifications is domestic violence. They are many causes of domestic violence, but let's take look at the most prominent causes of menace. Oguiche et al. (2022), identified the following as the causes of Domestic Violence (broken homes):

- i. **Lack of Time Management:** As the saying goes, "proper preparation prevents poor performance", a lot of people find it difficult to mark out a good schedule of their daily activities thereby neglecting their home at the expense of their work. One can't imagine homes that care less about their kids just because pillar of too busy. Everyone is busy but the ability to map out a good time to cater for the children makes a perfect home while the inability map out time to cater for the family leads to broken home.
- ii. **Strange Partners:** In the home, some partners are very secretive in their attitude and ways of life. They smile when you expected them to react to something you know that hurts them. They never share their feelings about any issue with their partners. Some may even go to the extent of over monitoring the schedule of their partners. This shows the lack of trust and confidence as thus causes marital instability which in turn leads to domestic violence.
- iii. **Slavery Mind-set:** The word "help-meet" in the home is fast losing its meaning as most people are now over-conscious of the meaning of this word. Some spouse sees their partner as a slave putting all duties, especially house chores on them. There is no evil if a man decides to cook dinner for his family and there is no evil if a woman should pay the bills of the family if she has the means but over-consciousness of being called a fool is affecting the mentality of most people.
- iv. **Over-Reaction:** Humans are not perfect and are bound to make mistake. Over reaction to these mistakes may sometimes determine the lifespan of the relationship or marriage. Some people over react irrationally to some issues that need to be settled amicably when the man is angry, what is expected of the wife is to be quiet and vice versa because two mad persons cannot build a home.
- v. **Multi-Party Peacemaker;** Advise from friends or close relatives often leads to domestic violence. Since there are bound to be a disagreement in the home, the best thing to do is to settle it amicably in the four corners of the house and not calling on outsiders or members of the extended family to come and settle it for you being the couples because it will not always work out that way at times. Their contributions might worsen or escalate the issue at hand.
- vi. **Finances;** Money or lack of it is one of the leading causes of domestic violence. Inability to pay bills makes partners snap at each other. Also, spending money without your spouse knowing causes resentment and anger. This is true if you cannot pay your bills or debts due to excess in spending.
- vii. **Sexual Unfaithfulness;** According to the definition of marriage "marriage is the union between a man and a woman to become one flesh. Since it is marriage that joined them together, it will be wrong for either of them to refuse to submit him/herself to each other. Denial of sex by any of the couple might lead the other to look for it somewhere else. Sadly enough, cheating is prevalent among married couples. It is estimated that infidelity has occurred in nearly eighty percent (80%) of all marriages (Iyeh and Ogwuche, 2017). This percentage according to them is higher than earlier years, mostly due to the internet; it is no longer hard to find someone to have an affair within the cyberspace. The devastation, heartbreak and loss of trust are difficult obstacles to

overcome once a spouse has cheated. Infidelity often leads to marriage separation and ultimately divorce which will give birth to broken home and which effect is not palatable for the children therein because it tends to affect them academically.

- viii. Language Use and Lack of Effective Communication;** A married couple is a team and to be a successful team there must be moderate use of language and effective communication. Lack of effective communication is a big factor that leads to marriage separation. They may be communication but how effective is it? Without effective communication, expectations such as likes, dislikes and dreams will all go unsaid. It is difficult for a marriage to flourish if you or partner feels unsatisfied. If something is bothering you, speak up and when your partner voices his or her concerns listen and figure out a plan of action together.

Influence of Violence against Women

After the Fourth World Conference on women in Beijing in 1995, it was observed that violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace. Violence against women violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedom. UN (2005) reports that acts or threats of violence, whether occurring within the home or in the community, perpetrated and condoned by the state, instil fear and insecurity in women's lives. According to this report, the fear of violence, including harassment, is a permanent constraint on the mobility of women and limits their access to resources and basic activities. High social, health and economic costs to the individual and society are associated with violence against women. Violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared to men.

The Global Commission on Women's Health, (UNO, 2006) reports that in addition to morbidity and mortality, violence against women leads to psychological trauma, depression, substance abuse, injuries, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV infection, suicide and murder. The World Bank in its World Development Report (2003) for the first time assessed the health consequences of gender-based violence. Based on the limited data available, it estimated that in industrialized countries, rape and domestic violence takes away almost one in every five healthy year life of women aged 15 to 44 years. According to this report, on a per capita basis, the health burden of domestic violence is about the same for productive age for women in both developed and developing countries.

In the views of Akinjiola (2000), female genital mutilation or circumcision has negative consequences on the victims. He goes on to argue that the harmful practice leads to shock, injuries to the perineum or rectum, haemorrhage, infection and retention of urine and the long-term consequences are chronic pelvic infections, coital difficulties, lack of orgasm, and obstetric complications, permanent frigidity, temporary trauma and psychoses.

Theoretical Framework

This study focuses on Conflict Perspective Theory by Gluckman:

Conflict Perspective Theory Gluckman

The propounder of conflict perspective is Gluckman (1955). Conflict perspective theory states that conflict is a natural and inevitable phenomenon in the society. Gluckman (1955) analyses conflict in terms of interactive processes and depicts conflict as a form of socialization. According to him, conflict has some positive functions and can also be

dysfunctional only for social structures in which there is insufficient toleration or institutionalization of conflict. Gluckman (1955) looks at class conflict in industrial society and states that conflict can take place between different classes or groups in the society and not only between two classes, the owners and non-owners of the means of production as posited by Marx. Gluckman (1955), in his study of custom and conflict in Africa, also maintains that conflict is a common phenomenon in the society.

The conflict perspective assumes that inequality, competition, coercion, oppression and conflict in the society lead some people to have greater power than others. As a result, the conflict perspective focuses on the macro level of society. Contemporary conflict scholars have refined traditional Marxian conflict ideas to reflect contemporary patterns of behaviour and social structure. Thus, conflict is not viewed simply as a clash between classes or groups or owners and non-owners of the means of production. These conflicts occur within and across a wide variety of groups. For the purposes of this study, we have to concern ourselves with the contemporary conflict paradigm which can be understood in terms of some key themes or assumptions. Wallace and Wolf (2001) believe that one of the assumptions of contemporary conflict paradigm is that power is always at the base of social relationships and it is always scarce, unequally distributed and coercive. They went further to state that the social structure is based on the ability of some groups to dominate or impose their will on others. These theorists also assume that society is characterized by change, conflict and coercion.

Conflict perspective directs us to examine the ever-present facts of competition, coercion, inequality, oppression and conflict in society and particularly those processes that lead some people to have greater power and control and others to have little or none. The key premise in conflict paradigm is that disorder, disagreement and open hostility among individuals and groups is normal rather than abnormal. In other words, the issue of violence against women is regarded as a normal phenomenon. This may be the reason for perpetrating violence against women by males.

In contemporary society, the conflict paradigm provides one of the most useful frameworks for analyzing how factors such as race, class, gender, age, ethnicity and sexual orientation are connected to the unequal distribution of scarce goods and resources such as wealth, property, education and prestige. Gender is our main concern since the study is on gender violence. Gender stratification and inequality give rise to unequal allocation of societal resources among the sexes in the society.

Conflict paradigm by stating that although the organized power and privilege of a small group, whether consciously organized or not, is an important element for explaining social inequality though there are a host of other factors that equally explain inequality. The major problem with conflict paradigm is that it is not sufficiently different from structural functionalism and it focuses on analysis of human behaviour and society almost entirely on a macro level. In spite of the criticisms levelled against conflict paradigm, it offers a sociological explanation of violence against women. The central features of conflict paradigm are inequality and power and these two concepts are also included in the discussion of violence against women. There is a general belief that inequality of sexes and power relationships between males and females are factors that may influence violence against women.

This study is hinged on this theory. As stated by this theory that inequality, competition and oppression are reasons for conflict and once this can be resolved, couples

will have peaceful coexistence. The researcher is of the view that domestic violence can be a thing of the past if conflict among nursing mothers and their spouses can be resolved.

Research Design

The design adopted for this study is descriptive survey research design. This is a research method that describes a given state of affairs at a particular time (Afu, Oguche, Usman and Gimba, 2023). This research design permits the gathering of information through the use of questionnaire from a population based on appropriate sampling techniques. Also, descriptive survey research was considered suitable since it would solicit for information or responses from the respondents on the problem under investigation. It was on this basis that the researcher decided to use descriptive survey design.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised of all nursing mothers found in all the public health care centres in Benue state. The population of nursing mothers in Benue state are 27,497. While the total number of nursing mother in the nine selected public health care centres was three thousand nine hundred and thirty-five (3,935) (Health management information system, Ministry of Health, 2019), as at the time of this research.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The sample size for the study was 394 representing 10% of the total population which was obtained through a stratified random sampling technique to select three public health care centres each from Benue North, South and Central senatorial zones in Benue State, making a total of nine (9) health care centres. Balloting was used in selecting the health care centre from each of the senatorial zones. A proportionate random sampling was further used to select respondents from each of the selected health care centre. A total of 394 nursing mothers were selected on Glenn (2012) table of sample specification.

Instrumentation

The instrument for this study was a self-structured questionnaire designed by the researcher titled, “Domestic Violence on Nursing Mothers Questionnaire (DVNMQ). The questionnaire is therefore aimed at obtaining factual information from the respondents. The questionnaire was structured along four-point rating scale. The questionnaire consists of two sections. Section A: contained Demographic Data of the respondents for location, and Section B: contained twenty (20) items on Factors, Forms and Consequences of Domestic Violence on Nursing Mothers in Benue State. The main purpose of the structured statement was to allow the respondents specifically express their opinions by indicating a tick (✓) against the most appropriate option. The rating scale types of SA (4), A (3), D (2) and SD (1). When the scores are added, they made up a total of 10 points. When divided the 10/4 it would be 2.50, which was the decision rule point of 2.50. Any value that is 2.50 and above was agreed but any value that is below 2.50 fell to disagreement.

Method of Data Analysis

Hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test; this was because two variables which are rural and urban were tested. The decision rule for the mean score was that any score from 2.50 and above was agreed and any score below 2.50 was disagreed.

Data Presentation

The data presented and analyzed were demographic data, answering of research questions and testing of hypotheses.

Analysis of Demographic Data

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According to Location

Location	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Urban	168	42.60
Rural	226	57.40
Total	394	100.00

Table 1 shows that the number of urban respondents is 168 (42.60%) while that of rural respondents is 226 (57.40%). This implies that there were more rural participants in this study.

Answers to Research Questions

This section contains data of the research questions raised to guide this study:

Research Question One: What are the factors of domestic violence against nursing mothers in Benue State?

Table 2: Factors Responsible for Domestic Violence against Nursing Mothers in Benue State, Nigeria:

N=394				
S/N	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
1.	Persistent argument between spouse	3.20	.82	Agreed
2.	Husband and wife fighting	3.08	.86	Agreed
3.	Physical attack on nursing mothers	3.00	.84	Agreed
4.	Women must be submissive to their husbands	2.96	.95	Agreed
5.	Most women do not dress well	2.93	.85	Agreed
Sectional Mean		3.03	.86	Agreed

Table 2 showed the factors of domestic violence against nursing mothers in Benue State, Nigeria. The mean score for factors of domestic violence against nursing mothers in Benue state, Nigeria showed agreement to all the items, with a sectional mean score of 3.03 which is greater than 2.50 in a 4-point scale and a standard deviation of 0.86. Factors such as persistent argument between spouse, husband and wife fighting and physical attack on nursing mothers contributed majorly to domestic violence against nursing mothers in the study area.

Research Question Three: What is the influence of domestic violence on nursing mothers in Benue State?

Table 3: Influence of Domestic Violence on Nursing Mothers in Benue State, Nigeria
N=394

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
11.	Nursing mothers are humiliated by the husband	3.17	.78	Agreed
12.	Nursing mother often experience health complication as a result of domestic violence	2.93	.89	Agreed
13.	Nursing mothers find it difficult to adjust in the society when they are being abused	3.02	.81	Agreed
14.	Nursing mothers do not speak up when abused for fear of being divorced by their husbands	2.95	.88	Agreed
15.	Nursing mothers experience some form of psychological disorder as a result of domestic violence.	2.98	.88	Agreed
Sectional Mean		3.01	0.85	Agreed

Table 3 showed the influence of domestic violence on nursing mothers in Benue State, Nigeria. The result showed that the respondents agreed with all items and with an overall mean score of 3.01 and a standard deviation of 0.85. The result applied that domestic violence against nursing mothers have some consequences such as humiliation by husbands, difficult to adjust in the society and health complications.

Hypotheses Testing

The following Null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the responses of urban and rural nursing mothers on the factors of domestic violence on nursing mothers in Benue state.

Table 4: t-test on the Difference between the Responses of Urban and Rural Nursing Mothers on the Factors of Domestic Violence on Nursing Mothers in Benue State, Nigeria

Location	Number	Mean	sd	t-value	df	Sig(2-tailed)	Decision
Urban	168	3.04	.50135	.356	392	.722	Not Significant
Rural	226	3.02	.48383				

The analysis in Table 4 was carried out to test the difference between the responses of urban and rural nursing mothers on the factors of domestic violence on nursing mothers in Benue state. With the significant values of .722 (greater than the 0.05 level of significance), the hypothesis that says that there is no significant difference between the responses of urban and rural nursing mothers on the factors of domestic violence on nursing mothers in Benue state is therefore, accepted and concluded urban and rural nursing mothers did not differ significantly in factors of domestic violence.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the responses of urban and rural nursing mothers on the consequences of domestic violence against nursing mothers in Benue State.

Table 5: t-test on the Difference between the Responses of Urban and Rural Nursing Mothers on the Influence of Domestic Violence on Nursing Mothers in Benue State, Nigeria:

Location	Number	Mean	S. D	t-value	Df	Sig(2-tailed)	Decision
Urban	168	3.03	.51466	.602	392	.548	Not Significant
Rural	226	3.00	.44462				

The analysis in Table 5 was carried out to test the difference between the responses of urban and rural nursing mothers on the consequences of domestic violence on nursing mothers in Benue state. With the significant values of .548 (greater than the 0.05 level of significance), the hypothesis that says that there is no significant difference between the responses of urban and rural nursing mothers on the consequences of domestic violence against nursing mothers in Benue State is accepted and concluded that urban and rural nursing mothers did not differ significantly in the consequences of domestic violence.

Findings of the Study

The study revealed that:

1. The findings showed that Factors such as persistent argument between spouse, husband and wife fighting and physical attack on nursing mothers contributed majorly to domestic violence against nursing mothers in Benue State, Nigeria.
2. The study found that domestic violence against nursing mothers have some negative influence on its victims such as humiliation by husbands, difficult to adjust in the society and health complications.
3. Findings revealed that urban and rural nursing mothers did not differ significantly on the factors responsible for domestic violence.
4. The study found no statistically significant difference between urban and rural nursing mothers on the influence of domestic violence on women in Benue State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The result from the study shows that Factors such as persistent argument between spouse, husband and wife fighting and physical attack on nursing mothers contributed majorly to domestic violence against nursing mothers in Benue State, Nigeria. This seems not surprising because when there is no mutual understanding between spouses, it may lead to domestic violence. This is supported by the study of Igbokwe, Ukwuma and Onugwu (2003), who advocated that women should be submissive to their husbands to avoid domestic violence.

The finding from the study further showed that domestic violence against nursing mothers have some consequences such as humiliation by husbands, difficult to adjust in the society and health complications. This is supported by Huth and Levendosky (2002), who stated that, domestic violence during pregnancy is associated with numerous health problems for mothers and infants including more health problems during pregnancy, more likelihood of premature labour, and later entrance into prenatal care, lower infant birth weight, greater utilization of health care resources, and more prenatal substance use.

The study equally revealed that urban and rural nursing mothers did not differ significantly on the factors responsible for domestic violence. This goes to say that, the causes for domestic violence are not based on a particular region or location of the individual. This is in contrast to the study of Ukwuma and Onugwu (2003), who revealed that women in the rural setting are more likely to be victims of physical abuse. The study further shows that there is no significant difference between urban and rural nursing mothers on the influence of domestic violence on women in Benue State, Nigeria. This is not surprising because violence knows no location and the influence is not based on the individual's location. This is different from the view of Oli (2002) who stated that young, ever-married, respondents with medium level of education, urban residents and females were more knowledgeable in dealing with violence against women.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concluded that, that Factors such as persistent argument between spouse, husband and wife fighting and physical attack on nursing mothers contributed majorly to domestic violence against nursing mothers in Benue State, Nigeria and that domestic violence in Benue State takes forms of physical attack on nursing mothers, abusing nursing mothers verbally and harassed sexually. The study also concluded that domestic violence against nursing mothers have some consequences such as humiliation by husbands, difficult to adjust in the society and health complications and that the victims of domestic violence also play some roles that exposes them to domestic violence by disrespecting their husbands, in-laws, not performing their duties as a wife, financial demands and avoiding house chores. The study further concluded that urban and rural nursing mothers did not differ significantly in factors of domestic violence and that urban and rural nursing mothers did not differ significantly in the dominant forms of domestic violence. The study also concluded that there is no statistically significant difference between urban and rural nursing mothers on the influence of domestic violence against women in Benue State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made from the findings of this study:

1. Spouses should be encouraged by family members to leave in harmony and peaceful and stay clear of any argument that will lead to domestic violence.
2. Counsellors at all level should do more to enlighten spouses to understand the deadly implications of domestic violence and how to avoid its occurrences.
3. The study equally recommended that, nursing mothers, both those in urban and rural areas should be made to participate in seminars that will expose them to the dangers of domestic violence.
4. Domestic violence has a devastating influence on nursing mothers, as such, Benue state, through its health workers must ensure that any form of domestic violence is reported to appropriate authorities and this effort should be irrespective of location.

Suggestions for further research

This paper has only taken a theoretical look at influence of domestic violence on academic achievement of secondary school students in Benue State. Further research should look at:

1. Influence of domestic violence on maladaptive behaviours among students in Kogi State.

2. Factors and consequences of domestic violence on women in North Central Zone of Nigeria
3. Impact of domestic violence on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Benue state.

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