

Understanding the patterns and drivers of domestic violence against women in Birnin Kebbi Nigeria

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Abstract

Domestic violence against women in Birnin Kebbi remains a persistent social problem, reflecting complex dynamics shaped by power imbalances, patriarchal norms, and family structures. Acts of physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and economic abuse not only harm victims but also undermine social well-being, indicating the urgent need for context-specific preventive strategies and empowerment interventions. This study aims to examine the patterns, causes, and experiences of survivors of domestic violence in Birnin Kebbi, raise public awareness, and promote women's empowerment, equality, and anti-violence norms. A quantitative survey design with multi-stage sampling was employed, collecting data from 259 married women across diverse wards, residential clusters, streets, and households. Structured questionnaires captured experiences of domestic violence systematically, ensuring reliability, representativeness, cultural appropriateness, and confidentiality. Domestic violence in Birnin Kebbi Metropolis is shaped by high prevalence of physical, emotional, verbal, and economic abuse, social and cultural norms legitimizing male dominance, and structural factors like low education and women's economic dependency. These dynamics perpetuate power imbalances and multidimensional impacts on women. Effective prevention requires comprehensive interventions targeting behavior, socio-cultural norms, legal awareness, and women's empowerment. The study implies that Domestic violence prevention must integrate legal, social, and economic strategies, including gender-norm transformation, education access, vocational training, and women's empowerment, to address structural vulnerabilities, reduce abuse, and effectively disrupt cycles of domestic violence.



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INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence remains a critical global social issue, disproportionately affecting women and persisting across diverse societies (Wake & Kandula, 2022). The forms and characteristics of violence vary regionally, necessitating a contextual understanding of its manifestations and dynamics (Bochenkova et al., 2023). Importantly, domestic violence extends beyond intimate partner relationships to include children and other family members (Stewart et al., 2020). Studies indicate that nearly one-third of women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner (Sardinha et al., 2024). Such violence not only harms victims directly but also adversely affects broader quality of life and social development (Rose et al., 2023; Amir-ud-Din et al., 2024). Ribeiro et al. (2022) further highlight that domestic violence is driven by power imbalances, manifesting as aggression or intimidation within households. Consequently, addressing domestic violence requires preventive measures and empowerment strategies that are grounded in the specific social and cultural context of affected communities.

Violence against women has increasingly gained international attention due to its occurrence across different social groups and age ranges. Research highlights the profound impacts of such violence on women's physical, sexual, psychological, and social well-being (Linn et al., 2024). Violence is characterized by the use of threats or force that may cause injury or harm (Bravo-Queipo-de-Llano et al., 2024) and, specifically, gender-based violence results in physical, sexual, or psychological suffering, including coercion, threats, and restriction of personal freedom (Dahie et al., 2023). This phenomenon is a manifestation of unequal power relations between men and women (Londono et al., 2021). In Nigeria, the prevalence of violence against women remains high, with women frequently experiencing humiliation, abuse, and exploitation (Okafor et al., 2023; Zaki et al., 2025). Globally, nearly one-third of women have experienced physical or sexual violence during their lifetime (Bengesai et al., 2024). Understanding these patterns, causes, and impacts is essential to inform effective interventions and promote strategies to prevent and mitigate violence against women.

Despite the high prevalence of domestic violence against women in Nigeria, the issue remains under-documented, particularly in specific local contexts such as Birnin Kebbi (Ekhaton-Mobayode et al., 2022). Conditions of insecurity, including conflict and social tensions, have further heightened women's vulnerability to intimate partner violence. Historically, women in several Nigerian communities have experienced humiliation and exploitation, even in cultural settings where they are otherwise respected. Globally, nearly one-third of women aged 15 and above have suffered physical or sexual violence, leading to long-term consequences such as depression, anxiety, unintended pregnancies, and sexually transmitted infections (Baneshi et al., 2025). Domestic violence may manifest in physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, or economic forms of abuse (Doyle, 2020). In Birnin Kebbi, women remain the most affected population, highlighting the need for comprehensive interventions and coordinated efforts between government agencies and civil society organizations to effectively address and prevent gender-based violence.

This study aims to contribute to the development of knowledge on domestic violence against women in the metropolitan area of Birnin Kebbi. It specifically seeks to foster a culture of mutual respect, equality, and non-violence in intimate relationships by enhancing understanding of the patterns, causal factors, and experiences of survivors. By amplifying the voices of women affected by violence, raising public awareness, and advocating for social and policy changes, the study is expected to empower women and challenge harmful gender stereotypes. Ultimately, the research aims to promote a safer and more just social

environment, enabling individuals to live free from fear, threat, and harm in both domestic and interpersonal spheres.

This study highlights the critical importance of understanding domestic violence against women in Birnin Kebbi as a complex phenomenon shaped by power relations, socio-cultural structures, and survivor experiences. By examining the forms, causes, and consequences of such violence, the research seeks to amplify survivors' voices, raise public awareness, and promote social and policy reforms that advance gender equality. Additionally, it aims to foster respect, equality, and non-violence within intimate relationships by empowering women and challenging harmful stereotypes. Guided by these objectives, the study addresses key research questions: How do patterns of domestic violence emerge in the local context? What factors influence its occurrence? And how can survivor experiences and coping strategies inform the design of more effective and sustainable interventions, support services, and policies?

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative survey design, which is considered appropriate for collecting data from a specific population and allows for a systematic depiction of patterns and trends within a phenomenon. Surveys were chosen because they can efficiently gather information from a large number of respondents while enabling comparative analysis across subgroups. Furthermore, this method is relevant for research on domestic violence (DV) as it can reduce psychological pressure on respondents and ensure anonymity, thereby increasing openness in reporting sensitive experiences (Ahmed, 2024; Cash et al., 2022).

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of married women in Metropolis Birnin Kebbi, with a total of 259 respondents. The sample size was determined based on considerations of population representativeness, logistical feasibility, and recommendations from literature on similar surveys (Anderson et al., 2024). The sample was selected using a combination of multi-stage random sampling and purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was applied to ensure that each respondent was a married woman who was available and willing to participate, while multi-stage random sampling was used to minimize researcher bias and ensure geographic and socio-economic representation.

Sampling Stages

In the first stage, from 15 wards in Metropolis Birnin Kebbi, 7 wards were randomly selected using the lottery method (Li et al., 2024), where the names of the wards were written on paper, folded, mixed, and drawn without replacement. In the second stage, each selected ward was divided into residential clusters, and 3 locations were randomly chosen from each ward using the same method (Schroder, 2025). In the third stage, each location was mapped based on its street network, and 5 streets were randomly selected from each location, resulting in a total of 105 streets (Guevara et al., 2022). In the final stage, from the 105 streets, 2 households were selected using a systematic skip method with an interval of every fifth house to avoid proximity bias, and within each household, one available married woman was chosen as a respondent through purposive sampling (Alzoubi & Mishra, 2024).

Research Instrument

The primary instrument of this study was a structured questionnaire, designed to collect data consistently and systematically regarding experiences of domestic violence (Philip, 2024). The questionnaire was developed with attention to clarity, confidentiality, and cultural

appropriateness (Webster et al., 2025) and was pretested on 20 respondents to assess its validity and reliability before deployment.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted by enumerators trained to uphold research ethics and ensure respondent comfort, with emphasis on anonymity and confidentiality due to the sensitive nature of domestic violence. The collected data were subsequently analyzed descriptively and comparatively to identify patterns and trends in domestic violence experiences among respondent subgroups, allowing for a systematic interpretation of the phenomenon.

Data Analysis and Validity

The data collected in this study were quantitative, obtained through structured questionnaires on experiences of domestic violence among married women in Metropolis Birnin Kebbi. One major challenge in domestic violence research is the sensitive nature of the topic, which can lead to underreporting or inaccurate responses due to shame, fear, or social pressure. To address this, the questionnaire was designed to be sensitive, anonymous, and easy to understand, and enumerators were trained to maintain confidentiality and respondent comfort. Data validity was ensured through a pretest of the questionnaire with 20 respondents to confirm that questions were clear, relevant, and culturally appropriate, and through consistency checks during data collection. Data were analyzed descriptively to describe respondent characteristics and the distribution of domestic violence experiences, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Additionally, comparative analyses were conducted to compare domestic violence experiences across respondent subgroups, such as by age, education, socio-economic status, or length of marriage, using statistical tests such as Chi-square, t-tests, or ANOVA, depending on the type of variable. This approach allowed the researcher to identify patterns, trends, and differences in domestic violence experiences, while ensuring that the analyzed data were valid, systematic, and reliable for understanding the phenomenon of domestic violence in Metropolis Birnin Kebbi.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Demographic characteristic of respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents in this study reveal diverse backgrounds in terms of age, ethnicity, number of children, and educational qualifications. The majority of participants were between 29-38 years old, with varied ethnic groups represented, including Hausa/Fulani, Zabarmawa, and Yoruba. Most respondents had secondary education, and a significant portion had between one to three children, reflecting a broad spectrum of socio-cultural and educational experiences.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristic of Respondents

Items	Response	Frequency	Percent
Age	29-38	115	43.89
	18-28	53	20.23
	39-48	42	16.03
	Below 18	34	12.98
	49 and above	15	5.73
	Total	259	100.0
Ethnicity	Hausa/ Fulani	72	39.1
	Zabarmawa	77	29.39

Numbers of Children	Yoruba	57	21.76
	Fulani	40	15.27
	Hausa	38	14.5
	Igbo	32	12.21
	Lelna	13	4.96
	Total	259	100.0
	2	70	26.34
	3	49	18.7
	1	35	13.36
	4	31	11.83
	5	20	7.63
	6	17	6.49
	None	14	5.34
	7	10	3.82
	8	6	2.29
	10 above	4	1.53
	9	3	1.15
	Total	259	100.0
	Educational Qualification	Secondary education	100
Primary education		67	24.43
Tertiary education		52	19.85
No formal education		40	15.27
Total		259	100.0

Table 1 revealed that majority of the respondent (43.89% $n=115$) was between 29-38 years of age. This shows that Birnin Kebbi metropolis had a middle-age population. These populations of middle age were matured and exposed to reality of life including domestic's violence. At 29-38, it was expected that such age groups were married and had experienced marital challenges, which might include domestic's violence and its consequences on both family and the society at large. With regard to ethnicity, majority, 39.1% were Hausa/Fulani as the dominate ethnic groups in Birnin Kebbi metropolis. This is not surprising as the present Kebbi metropolis had its origin from the formal Kabi Kingdom which was founded by Muhammadu Kanta and it was an expansion of the Sokoto caliphate established by Usman Danfodio a well-known Fulani. The study also revealed that 26.34% ($n=70$) have 2 children, 18.7% ($n=49$) have 3 children, 13.36% ($n=35$) have 1, 11.83% ($n=31$) have 4 children, 7.63% ($n=20$) have 5 children, 6.49% ($n=17$) have 6 children, 5.34% ($n=14$) have no children, and 3.82% ($n=10$) have 7 children.

It was however surprising to know that Kebbi metropolis being state capital of Kebbi State majority of the residents (15.27%, $n=40$) did not have formal education; rather, they preferred Islamic education. It was disturbing to know that only (19.85%) of the population had attended education to higher institution of learning. While 38.17% ($n=100$) have secondary school leaving certificate, while 24.43% ($n=67$) attended only primary school. This was however, beyond the expectation of the researcher and the general assumption that metropolitan cities like Kebbi had more educated people compare to rural dweller.

Socio-demographic characteristic of respondents

This section presents the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, offering insights into their religious affiliation, occupation, income level, family structure, and area of residence. The respondents reflect a religiously diverse population, predominantly comprising adherents of Islam and Christianity. In terms of occupation, many identified as full-time housewives, traders, artisans, or engaged in agricultural activities. A significant number reported having no regular income or earning minimal monthly wages, indicating varying

levels of economic stability. The majority of households were headed by husbands, with a smaller proportion led by wives. Respondents were drawn from multiple wards within Birnin Kebbi Metropolis, ensuring broad and inclusive representation across the study area.

Table 2
Socio-demographic Characteristic of Respondents

Items	Response	Frequency	Percent
Religion	Christianity	113	43.13
	Islam	137	61.87
	Total	259	100.0
Occupation	Full House wife	67	25.57
	Trading	61	23.28
	Artisan	33	10.6
	Crop Production	32	10.21
	Unemployed	31	11.83
	Animal Production	26	9.92
	Civil servant	23	8.78
	Total	259	100.0
Income	No Monthly Income	71	27.58
	6000-10000	47	17.94
	Less than 5000	42	18.03
	11000-15000	28	12.69
	21000-30000	19	7.25
	16000-20000	16	6.11
	31000 -40000	10	3.82
	71000 and above	9	3.44
	41000-50000	8	3.05
	Total	259	100.0
Head of Family	Husband	210	81.3
	Wife	49	18.7
	Total	259	100.0
Ward	Birnin Kebbi Marafa,	44	16.79
	Kola,	43	16.41
	Gwadangwaji,	39	14.89
	Makera,	39	14.89
	Birnin Kebbi	36	13.74
	Nassarawa-1,	31	11.35
	Nassarawa-2,	27	11.07
	Total	258	100.0

Note: Field work, 2024

Table 2 presents the composition of respondents based on religion, employment status, income level, and perceptions of household leadership. The majority of respondents are Muslims (61.87%), while 43.13% are Christians, indicating that domestic violence occurs within a religiously diverse community. In terms of employment, 25.57% are full-time housewives and 23.28% are traders, while only 8.78% are civil servants working in the formal sector. These findings suggest that most women operate in informal work settings or are not employed, which may increase economic dependency on their partners.

The income distribution further reflects significant economic vulnerability: 27.58% have no monthly income, and most others earn very low incomes, with the majority earning less than 10,000 per month. Only a small fraction (3.44%) earn more than 71,000 monthly. Such economic disparities can reduce women's bargaining power within the household. Additionally, 81% of respondents stated that the husband is the head of the household, while only 18.7% identified the wife as the household head. This dominant perception highlights the

strong patriarchal structure within families, which may normalize male control and heighten the risk of gender-based violence. Overall, this table illustrates how religious, economic, and power-structure factors intersect to shape women's vulnerability to domestic violence.

Types of domestic violence in Birnin Kebbi LGA

These findings present the forms of domestic violence experienced by women in Birnin Kebbi. The data show that most respondents have encountered multiple types of abuse, including physical harm, emotional intimidation, and the neglect of basic needs. The wide variation in these forms of violence illustrates the complex dynamics within household relationships, where power imbalances and economic dependence often reinforce patterns of abuse. Overall, the findings highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions and prevention strategies to address domestic violence and improve the safety and well-being of women in the area.

Table 3

Types of Domestic Violence in Birnin Kebbi LGA

Items	Response	Frequency	Percent
Are you victims of domestic Violence?	Yes	162	61.83
	No	94	38.17
	Total	259	100.0
It is going on now?	No	142	55.34
	Yes	117	44.66
	Total	259	100.0
Type of domestic violence were you subjected to	My husband maltreats me	82	30.3
	No regular food to eat	70	23.72
	Husband abuses me Verbally	63	15.7
	My husband batters me	44	13.79
	My husband neglects my children	43	13.41
	Others	14	3.34
	Total	259	100.0
What do you consider as the Domestic violence?	Child-Neglects	79	23.0
	Wife Battery	70	20.0
	Sexual Assault	58	12.0
	Husband having sex without consent	53	10.0
	Fight/Quarrel	34	12.0
	Making wife angry	34	8.0
	Emotional Abuse	30	9.0
	Biting	19	6.0
	Total	259	100.0
Which type(s) of domestic violence do you know is dominant or common in your community?	Wife Battery	92	25.1
	Child-Neglects	75	18.6
	Sexual Assault	53	15.2
	Fight/Quarrel	41	12.5
	Husband having sex without consent	41	12.6
	Making wife angry	35	8.0
	Emotional Abuse	28	6.0
	Biting	11	2.0
	Total	259	100.0

Note: Field Survey (2024)

Table 3 revealed that 61.83% (n-162) of the respondents were victims of domestic violence, and 55.34% (n-142) stated that the act is still ongoing, while 44.66% stated that it

has stopped. It was also revealed that wife maltreatment by husbands 30/3% (n-82) and no regular food to eat (23.72%, n-70) were the common types of domestic violence in Birnin Kebbi metropolis. More so, child neglect (23.0% n-79) and wife battery (20.0% n-70) were commonly considered as domestic violence by women in Birnin Kebbi Metropolis. More so, wife battery (25.1% n-92), 18.6% (n-75), Sexual assault 15.2% (n-53), were the dominant domestic violence faced by women in Birnin Kebbi Metropolis.

Table 4*Types of Domestic Violence in Birnin Kebbi LGA*

Items	Response	Frequency	Percent
How do you rate the level of domestic violence in Birnin Kebbi?	Low	85	32.44
	High	76	29.01
	Very low	68	25.95
	Moderate	30	12.6
	Total	259	100.0
Beating of wives is culturally approved way of instilling discipline in Birnin Kebbi	Strongly Disagreed	114	43.51
	Agreed	58	23.29
	Strongly Agreed	49	18.7
	Disagreed	38	14.5
	Total	259	100.0
Awareness of the Institution(s) specialized in taking care of women who have experienced violence by the husbands/partners in Birnin Kebbi.	No	113	43.13
	Yes	107	34.73
	Doubting/Not sure	50	19.08
	Total	259	100.0
Institutions where domestic violence were reported to.	District Palace	58	22.14
	Counseling Centers	44	16.79
	Ministry of Women Affairs	42	16.03
	Police	42	16.03
	Civil Defense	36	13.74
	Court	35	13.36
	Religious Organization	32	12.21
	Civil society	26	9.92
	Total	259	100.0
Will you be happy if your husband is imprisoned for abusing you?	Strongly agreed	43	16.41
	Agreed	57	21.76
	Disagreed	57	21.76
	Strongly disagreed	102	38.93
	Total	259	100.0
Will you consider your children by not allowing your husband go to prison for domestic violence?	Yes	200	76.34
	No	59	20.61
	Total	259	100.0

Note: Field survey (2024)

Table 4 revealed that 32.44% (n-85) rated domestic violence low, 29.01% (n-76) rated it high, 25.95% (n-86) rated it very low and 12.6% (n-30) rated it moderate. More so, wives and child beating (43.51, n-114%) were not perceived as a way of instilling discipline. This shows the understanding of nature of domestic violence among the respondent and this can be attributed to their level of education and the ability to distinguish between discipline and domestic violence. However, for those that believed wives and child beating were cultural ways of instilling discipline lack proper understanding of what discipline entails and what

constitute domestic violence. 43.13% (n=113) did not know where to report the case of domestic violence. The inability of the respondents to know the institutions specialized in taking care of victims of domestic violence revealed their level of education and exposure to social events, and those that were aware of institutions mostly reported to their parents and ward heads. While 34.73% (n=107) of those that know where to report the case of domestic violence, majority which is 22.14% (n=58) stated the district palace, 16.79% and 16.03% stated counseling center, ministry of women affairs and police station respectively. 12.21% (n=32) stated religious organization as a place to report domestic violence. Furthermore, 38.93% (n=102) stated that they would not be happy if their husbands are been arrested, while 21.76% (n=57) stated that they would be happy if their husband are arrested. While 76.34% (n=200) stated that they would considered their children while 20.61% (n=59) stated they wouldn't considered their children.

Discussion

Prevalence and types of domestic violence in Birnin Kebbi metropolis

The study findings indicate that the prevalence of domestic violence in Birnin Kebbi Metropolis is relatively high, with 61.83% of respondents experiencing various forms of violence, including physical, emotional, and economic abuse. These findings confirm that domestic violence is not an incidental event but a recurring pattern reflecting an imbalance of power within households. Physical violence was the most frequently reported, affecting 25.1% of respondents, while 23.72% experienced economic violence through restricted access to essential needs. Additionally, verbal, emotional, and sexual violence were also documented, resulting in significant psychological impacts such as low self-esteem, anxiety, and social isolation ([Huang et al., 2024](#); [Kumar et al., 2013](#)). These findings highlight the multidimensional nature of domestic violence, affecting women's physical health, mental well-being, and dignity, consistent with previous studies ([Dulhunty, 2025](#); [Torrance et al., 2024](#)).

The analysis reveals a complex interplay between types of violence, gender norms, and power control within households. Physical and economic violence represent direct forms of domination, whereby perpetrators seek to maintain a superior position, while verbal and emotional abuse function as long-term pressures that weaken the victim's psychological resilience ([Bergvall, 2024](#); [Goergen & Beaulieu, 2013](#); [Bright et al., 2020](#)). Social and cultural factors, including traditional gender norms that position men as primary authority figures, moderate the effects of violence, making it difficult for victims to resist or report these acts ([Abdalla et al., 2024](#); [Le et al., 2024](#)). Thus, domestic violence can be understood as a phenomenon involving interactions between power relations, economic control, psychological pressure, and social norms that normalize abuse, in line with Winstok's (2007) framework on imbalanced relationship dynamics.

These findings underscore novelty by emphasizing the high prevalence of domestic violence within the social and cultural context of Birnin Kebbi, which has been rarely documented quantitatively. Consistency with global literature is evident in the fact that many victims seldom seek help due to social pressure and normalization of violence in domestic life ([Colagrossi et al., 2023](#); [Le et al., 2024](#)). However, this study adds a local perspective by highlighting how traditional social values and gender norms specifically weaken women's positions, perpetuate cycles of violence, and delay intervention ([Abdalla et al., 2024](#)). Contextual interpretation is crucial for designing effective intervention strategies, as it indicates that domestic violence prevention efforts must address not only individual factors but also the social and cultural structures that sustain abuse.

The role of cultural norms and social structures in perpetuating domestic violence

The study findings indicate that social and cultural norms play a significant role in normalizing and sustaining domestic violence (DV) in Birnin Kebbi Metropolis. Approximately 41.99% of respondents consider wife-beating acceptable as a form of discipline, while many believe that marriage grants sexual rights irrespective of the wife's consent (Sedziafa et al., 2019; Widanaralalage et al., 2025). These perceptions highlight that domestic violence is not only physical but also embedded in widely accepted social and cultural practices. Such views underscore psychological and social impacts, including fear, low self-esteem, and difficulty reporting abuse (Bondestam & Lundqvist, 2020; Bhatt et al., 2023), marking domestic violence as a multidimensional phenomenon affecting women's dignity, safety, and well-being.

Analysis of variable relationships shows that cultural and social norms function as mediating mechanisms that reinforce domestic violence. Beliefs that husband's beating or domination can be justified as "discipline" or efforts to "maintain family order" create an environment in which aggressive behavior becomes normalized and difficult to report (Lansford et al., 2020; Dhawan & Bhasin, 2024). The internalization of these norms by both genders strengthens power inequality, reduces the likelihood of intervention, and prolongs the cycle of violence (Hosny et al., 2023; Richardson et al., 2025). Moreover, misunderstandings regarding husbands' sexual rights and wives' obligations to obey moderate reporting and intervention rates, allowing physical, emotional, and sexual abuse to persist in households (Gewirtz-Meydan & Godbout, 2023; Sedziafa et al., 2019).

These findings are consistent with international literature, where patriarchal societies often justify violence against wives as corrective or acceptable behavior within marriage (Ryu & Pratt, 2025; Namy et al., 2017). However, this study provides a local perspective by emphasizing the Birnin Kebbi context, where social norms and traditional values specifically legitimize violence, delay interventions, and maintain household inequality (Dhawan & Bhasin, 2024; Lansford et al., 2020). Contextual understanding is crucial for designing effective prevention and intervention strategies, as it suggests that individual behavior change must be accompanied by transformation of social and cultural norms that normalize violence, particularly concerning gender roles and marital rights.

Socioeconomic factors on vulnerability and domestic violence

The study findings indicate that structural and social factors significantly influence domestic violence (DV), particularly low education and women's economic dependency. Women with limited education often struggle to recognize abusive behavior or understand their legal rights, increasing their risk of being trapped in unhealthy relationships (Shahriar & Alam, 2024; Campbell, 2020). Economic inequality and social vulnerability further elevate the risk of domestic violence, as women who rely entirely on their partners for basic needs are more easily manipulated and controlled (Mshweshwe, 2020; Khanna et al., 2023). These findings underscore that education, legal awareness, and access to resources are key determinants of women's ability to protect themselves and reduce exposure to violence (Orr et al., 2023; Bhuwania et al., 2024).

Analysis of variable relationships shows that education and economic dependency act as mediating mechanisms affecting women's vulnerability to domestic violence. Low education limits employment opportunities, reduces self-confidence, and narrows women's capacity to recognize abuse or seek justice (Bhuwania et al., 2024; Hardt et al., 2023). Economic dependency reinforces power imbalances within households, enabling perpetrators to maintain dominance and perpetuate cycles of violence (Khanna et al., 2023; McAlpine et al., 2024). Conversely, women's empowerment through education, vocational training, and

legal awareness serves as a protective factor, directly reducing dependency and enhancing women's ability to make strategic decisions regarding their safety and well-being (Kiani et al., 2021; Kazibwe & Li, 2025; Davis & Williamson, 2022).

These findings align with international literature emphasizing education, economic status, and women's empowerment as structural determinants of domestic violence (Novitzky et al., 2023; Orr et al., 2023). The study adds novelty by linking the local context women's economic dependency and educational access to specific household power dynamics in the study area. Contextual interpretation suggests that domestic violence prevention interventions should address not only legal aspects but also the transformation of education, economic conditions, and women's awareness (Kiani et al., 2021; Davis & Williamson, 2022). Thus, women's empowerment represents a comprehensive strategy integrating legal, social, and economic dimensions to reduce vulnerability to violence and break the cycle of domestic violence.

The study enriches understanding of domestic violence by emphasizing the complex interaction between power relations, socio-cultural norms, and structural factors such as education and economic dependency. Domestic violence is not merely an individual phenomenon but is influenced by social mechanisms that normalize patriarchal dominance and prolong cycles of abuse. Practically, prevention efforts should target transforming social and cultural norms through education and gender awareness, while simultaneously enhancing women's empowerment via access to education, training, and legal capacity. Comprehensive intervention strategies need to integrate legal, social, and economic aspects to be not only reactive but also preventive, effectively disrupting cycles of domestic violence.

This study has several limitations. First, the data are quantitative and based on respondents' perceptions, so underreporting due to social pressure or stigma related to domestic violence is possible. Second, the study focuses on the Birnin Kebbi Metropolis, so the findings may not be fully generalizable to other cultural or social contexts in Nigeria or beyond. For future research, longitudinal studies are recommended to explore the dynamics of domestic violence over time, including interventions based on education and economic empowerment. Qualitative studies are also important to investigate the in-depth perceptions of victims and perpetrators, as well as to understand the internalization mechanisms of norms that normalize violence.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study findings, it can be concluded that domestic violence in Birnin Kebbi Metropolis is influenced by a complex interaction of factors, including the high prevalence of physical, emotional, verbal, and economic abuse; social and cultural norms that normalize and legitimize male dominance; and structural factors such as low education and women's economic dependency. These patterns reinforce power imbalances within households, perpetuate cycles of violence, and produce multidimensional impacts on women's physical health, psychological well-being, and dignity. The study underscores the importance of comprehensive interventions that target not only individual behavior change but also the transformation of socio-cultural norms, legal awareness, and women's empowerment through access to education, training, and economic resources, enabling DV prevention strategies to be both preventive and effective in breaking the cycle of violence.

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Author Contribution Statement

Sanusi Naja'atu Baura: Methodology, Visualization, Writing – original draft. Abdulmumin Musa Omiya: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Writing – review & editing, Investigation and Resources.

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