J. Pub. Health &Tox. Res., 3(3): 340-348 (2026)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.71637/jphtr.vol3no3.69

TRENDS, DRIVERS AND RESOLUTION STRATEGIES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG COUPLES IN NNEWI, ANAMBRA STATE.

Nwafor Ifeyinwa Eunice; Blessing Tochukwu Onyeje; and Faith Diorgu

[1]*Africa Center of Excellence in Public Health and Toxicological Research, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria*

**Corresponding author email: ifeyinwa_nwafor@uniport.edu.ng*

Article History

Received: 12 Jun 2026
Accepted: 26 Jul 2026
Published: 07 Aug 2026

Abstract

Domestic violence (DV), also referred to as intimate partner violence (IPV), remains a significant public health, human rights, and social justice issue affecting millions of individuals worldwide, particularly women. This cross-sectional survey aims to investigate the trends, drivers and resolution strategies adopted by couples who have suffered domestic violence in Nnewi, Anambra State. A Snowball sampling technique was employed to recruit 186 participants. Self-structured and validated questionnaires were used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was established using the split-half method on 19 participants outside the study population, with an acceptable Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.75. Generated data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 30, and results were presented in frequency tables and charts. Associations between variables were established using logistic regression. Findings from the study indicated that 100% of the respondents had been through DV incidents of one form or another. Physical abuse (39.8%) seems to be the most prevalent form amongst couples in Nnewi, Anambra State. Significantly, from the list of major factors fueling DV in Nnewi was unemployment/financial stress (21.5). Consequences of DV showed physical injuries as the most commonly reported outcome (43.6%), while pregnancy loss (31.7%) took the second unfair place. All the sociodemographic variables examined were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and associated with DV. Data arising from the findings suggest that for the prevention of DV among couples in Nnewi, Anambra State, we need integrated approaches (economic empowerment, alcohol reduction, emergency preparedness, and campaigns to change harmful gender norms).

Keywords: Trends, drivers, resolution strategies, domestic violence, couples.

How to cite this paper: *Nwafor et al., (2026). Trends, Drivers and Resolution Strategies of Domestic Violence among Couples in Nnewi, Anambra State. Journal of Public Health and Toxicological Research,* 3(3): 340-348 (2026)

1. Introduction

Domestic violence (DV), commonly known as intimate partner violence (IPV), is a major public health policy, human rights, and social justice issue that affects millions of individuals worldwide, chiefly women. It may include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, or financial abuse waged by a partner against the other within an intimate relationship, as by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021). In a global perspective, WHO (2021) estimates that almost one out of every three women have been subjected to either physical violence from an intimate partner or sexual violence by a non-partner during their lifetime. This form of violence being so widespread carries immense health, psychological, and economic consequences on the victims, their Families, and their communities (Ndie et al., 2018).

Violence is one sad fact inherent in human societies, and one, which has greatly to do with the well-being of women, since it is widely presented in different forms across the globe. It is so in both developed and developing countries similar (Jewkes, et al, 2015). Womenfolk feel the brunt more than the menfolk who are "favoured" structurally by virtue of the societal make-up which is typically male (Fawole et al., 2021). Different from other crimes, domestic abuse, or Violence Against Women (VAW) in most cases involves direct personal issues and thus severely inhibits most victims from speaking out about the extent and effects of domestic abuse in their lives. Others' reasons of reluctance to report are that all such things happen without retaliation by the offender, and intimidation from the abuser, not least of which might be honour and social stigma. Hence there will be insufficient evidence in most cases for criminal justice institutions. to prosecute such offences concerning domestic violence (Okonkwo & Eze, 2023).

In Southeastern Nigeria, particularly in Anambra State, cultural norms, bride price traditions, economic stressors, and gender equality continue to maintain environments where domestic violence is rampant and largely justified (Chika & Onyemachi, 2022). [VAR] However, the women are often left scrambling in silence for fear of retaliation, for dependence upon the man for economic support, or out of pressure to keep the family together; while the pressure exerted in line with the masculine myth on behalf of the abused man provides the needed context of exchange on the gender paradox where both sexes suffer from hidden harms (Okonkwo & Eze, 2023).

The prevalence of actually obtaining empirical data about Domestic Violence in Nnewi as a locale is limited, along with change in patterns and core issues from emic perspectives. Majority of the 'emic' contributors believe that substance use, unemployment, and cultural practices while traditional marriage system favors bride-purchase-sanctioned domestic violence, infidelity, and poor communication is to some extent the major factors. But these have never been systematically studied within the context of Nnewi. Domestic Violence has grave implications on the public health. Constant muscular and internal organ injuries, reproductive health concerns, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and even death are caused due to this abuse (Okonkwo & Eze, 2023). As a result of what they see in abusive homes, children also suffer from developmental problems and potentially become perpetrators of domestic violence in adulthood (National Population Commission [NPC] & ICF, 2019). Designing specific approaches that relate to or that are beneficial for workforce groups, facilitating early identification and referral, and promoting communal and healthier partnerships among all groups is crucial among public health nurses and professionals for effectively dealing with the trends and influences of DV.

Given the complexity of domestic violence and its multidimensionality, it is clear that conducting quantitative research on its statistical data and socio-demographic correlates is not enough to understand the very lived experiences, perceptions, and coping mechanisms adapted by its victims. This study thus attempts to reposition the knowledge in the domain by providing an evidence-based insight into the changing nature of domestic violence in Nnewi and identifying culturally specific drivers that inform prevention and support programs.

Methodology

This quantitative study adopted a cross-sectional research design. it involved a cross-sectional survey to obtain measurable data on the prevalence, trends, and drivers of domestic violence and resolution strategies among couples. The population for this study consist of married and cohabiting couples aged 18 years and above, residing in Nnewi, Anambra State, living together for at least one year. Both male and female partner were considered, irrespective of educational level, or socio-economic status. This choice is informed by the understanding that domestic violence cuts across various demographic groups. The actual number of the target population is unknown, but Daniel's statistical formula for infinite population in health and social sciences was applied to determine the sample size. The sample size was determined using Daniel's formula, which is a widely used statistical formula in health and social science research, especially when estimating proportions in an unknown population. So, the sample size is 186. Therefore, a total of 186 participants were recruited for

the study. A Snowball sampling technique was employed to get the actual participants. This is because, the subjects of the study have no formal gathering where they will be seen together as a group. Ndie et al (2018) have used the same technique to evaluate the nature of domestic violence and coping strategies adopted by women suffering domestic violence with good results. The four villages of Nnewi (Otolo, Uruagu, Umudim, and Nnewichi) serve as seeds or clusters. From each cluster, households were identified through the help of community leaders, health centre workers or human rights lawyers to gain trust and identify victims of domestic violence. Within each household, eligible respondents (either male or female partner or both) were recruited. Each participant also directed the researcher to other couples or victims of DV to continue recruitment until the target sample size was completed. Self-structured questionnaire titled "Trends and Drivers of Domestic Violence and Resolution Strategies Practices" was developed to elicit relevant data from the respondents. The questionnaire consists of four sections with a total of 23 question items. Section A collected data on socio-demographic characteristics of respondents; Section B, data on prevalence and trends of DV; Section C, data on drivers of domestic violence; while Section D, elicited information on consequences and coping strategies to DV. The questionnaire items include both negative and positive skewed questions on a 4 point Likert scale. The reliability of the instrument was established using split-half reliability method. 19 copies of the research instrument (10% of the sample size) were given to couples in Oraifite (a neighbouring community that is not part of the study area) for pilot testing. The questionnaires were numbered 1 – 19 and the women were grouped into two, one group was given odd-numbered questions while the second half was given the even-numbered questions. The data generated were collated and analyzed using the Cronbach's Alpha method to assess internal consistency. The result revealed a strong positive relationship of 0.75 between the two sets of the administered questionnaire, hence the instrument was adjudged reliable. This is because a reliability coefficient of 0.70 and above is considered acceptable (Taber, 2018). Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires, with the help of two trained research assistants. For non-literate respondents, the questionnaire was researcher-administered, in the local Igbo language. Data collection took place at respondents' homes, meeting places, workplaces, health facilities, business areas, and churches. The researcher also recruited a few known victims and survivors of domestic violence within the communities, who then referred others in similar situations until the target sample size is completed. The data collection lasted for a period of 8 weeks with 100% return rate (186 distributed questionnaires returned).

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The collected data were entered into Microsoft Excel, cleaned and then exported and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 30 (IBM Corp., Armonk, New York, USA). Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) were used to summarize demographic variables and prevalence. Inferential statistics: Chi-square test and logistic regression were used to examine associations between socio-demographic variables and domestic violence.

Results

The result in Table 1 revealed that majority of the respondents (72.5%) are young people aged 18-35 years, and predominantly females (67.7%). Similarly, majority of the participant (52.7%) had primary education while significant proportion (22.6%) With regards to employment status, most of the respondents (63.4%) had some form of employment. Furthermore, more than one-third of participants (38.2%) earned less than ₦20,000, whereas the majority (61.8%) earned above this income level.

Figure 1 indicated that nearly half of the couples (48%) had been in a relationship for 6-10 years, while only a small proportion (12%) had sustained relationships lasting 16years or longer.

It can be observed in Figure 2 that most of the respondents (70%) had 3 children and above.

Table 2 shows that all the respondents suffered in some aspects of domestic violence. Physical abuse was observed in the largest percentage (39.8%). Sometimes means violence for 45.7% of the respondents. Occasionally, violence was infrequent for only 8.1%. In terms of the duration, 32.8% of what was experienced, lasted 6 to 12 months, while 29.6% lasted 1 to 3 years, with 11.8% exceeding 3 years. Even more, 78.0% said they never reported to anyone, while 22.0% disclosed it. When it comes to those who reported, the disclosure was

Table 1 Socio-demographic characteristics of Respondents

Age (Years)	Frequency (%)	Total (%)
18-25	90 (48.3)	
26-35	45 (24.2)	
36-45	30 (16.1)	**186 (100)**
46-55	15 (8.1)	
56 and above	6 (3.3)	
Gender		**186 (100)**
Male	60 (32.3)	
Female	126 (67.7)	
Marital status		**186 (100)**
Married	63 (33.9)	
Cohabiting	72 (38.7)	
Divorced	30 (16.1)	
Widowed	21 (11.3)	
Educational level		**186 (100)**
No formal education	42 (22.6)	
Primary	98 (52.7)	
Secondary	30 (16.1)	
Tertiary	16 (8.6)	
Occupation		**186 (100)**
Unemployed	68 (36.6)	
Trader	44 (23.7)	
Artisan	54 (29.0)	
Civil servant	20 (10.7)	
Monthly income		**186 (100)**
<₦20,000	71 (38.2)	
₦20,000–₦49,999	54 (29.0)	
₦50,000–₦99,999	36 (19.4)	
₦100,000 and above	25 (13.4)	
Religion		**186 (100)**
Christianity	173 (93.0)	
Islam	3 (1.6)	
Traditionalist	10 (5.4)	

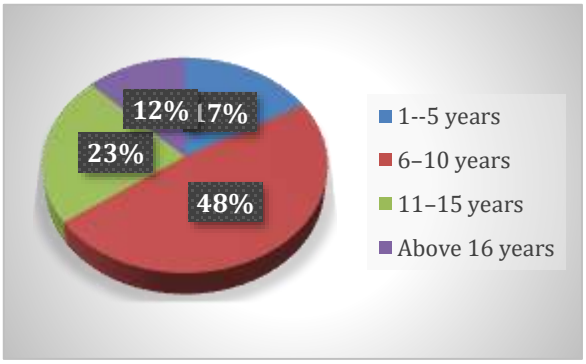

Fig 1: Duration of relationship

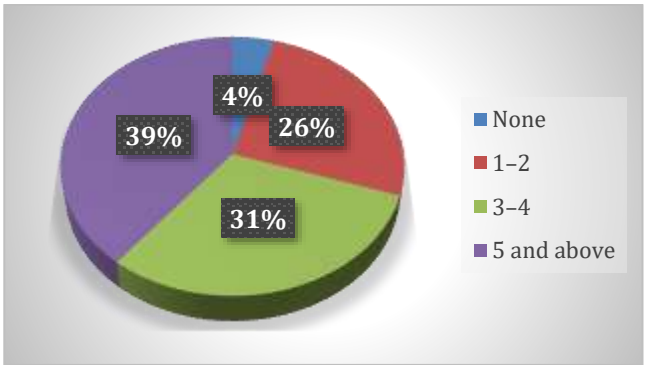

Fig 2: Number of children

lowest ranked for health workers (4.9%). Variously listed with high percentages for some respondents were family members (31.7%) and traditional or community authorities (19.5%)."

Table 3 showed that marital status, Age, Gender, Educational level, and Occupation are significantly associated with occurrence of domestic violence among couples.

Table 4 result showed that monthly income, religion, duration of relationship, and number of children had a significant association with domestic violence among couples.

Table 2: Forms and Prevalence of domestic violence

	Frequency (%)	Total (%)
Have you ever experienced domestic violence from your spouse/partner?		
Yes	186 (100)	**186 (100)**
No	0 (0)	
If yes, which of the following forms of violence have you experienced?		**186 (100)**
Physical abuse	74 (39.8)	
Emotional/verbal abuse	26 (14.0)	
Sexual abuse	29 (15.6)	
Economic abuse	30 (16.1)	
Psychological abuse	27 (14.5)	
How frequently does/did the violence occur?		
Rarely	15 (8.1)	**186 (100)**
Sometimes	32 (17.2)	
Often	85 (45.7)	
Very often	54 (30.0)	
How long has/did the abuse last?		
<6 months	48 (25.8)	**186 (100)**
6–12 months	61 (32.8)	
1–3 years	55 (29.6)	
More than 3 years	22 (11.8)	
Did you report the incident to anyone?		
Yes	41 (22.0)	
No	145 (78.0)	
If yes, to whom?		
Family	13 (31.7)	
Religious leader	6 (14.6)	**41 (100)**
Police	5 (12.2)	
Health worker	2 (4.9)	
Traditional/community authorities	8 (19.5)	
NGO	7 (17.1)	

Table 3: socio-demographic factors associated with occurrence of domestic violence among couples in Nnewi, Anambra State.

Ranks

	Forms of violence you have experienced	N	Mean Rank	Kruskal-Wallis H (df), p-value
Age:	Physical abuse	74	45.50	145.39 (4), p=0.000
	Emotional abuse	26	87.73	
	Sexual abuse	29	113.00	
	Economic abuse	30	135.50	
	Psychological abuse	27	163.00	
	Total	186		
Gender:	Physical abuse	74	48.09	
	Emotional abuse	26	123.50	
	Sexual abuse	29	123.50	133.33 (4), p=0.000
	Economic abuse	30	123.50	
	Psychological abuse	27	123.50	
	Total	186		
Marital status:	Physical abuse	74	42.03	
	Emotional abuse	26	99.50	
	Sexual abuse	29	99.50	162.63 (4), p=0.000
	Economic abuse	30	140.30	
	Psychological abuse	27	170.33	

	Total	186		
Educational level:	Physical abuse	74	51.99	
	Emotional abuse	26	92.00	
	Sexual abuse	29	92.00	33.81 (4), p=0.000
	Economic abuse	30	130.70	
	Psychological abuse	27	169.00	
	Total	186		
Occupation:	Physical abuse	74	39.04	
	Emotional abuse	26	90.50	
	Sexual abuse	29	140.91	157.38 (4), p=0.000
	Economic abuse	30	143.20	
	Psychological abuse	27	139.50	
	Total	186		

Table 4: socio-demographic factors are associated with domestic violence among couples in Nnewi, Anambra State

	Ranks			
	Forms of violence have you experienced	**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Kruskal-Wallis H (df), p-value**
Monthly income:	Physical abuse	74	38.53	
	Emotional abuse	26	98.50	177.43 (4), p=0.000
	Sexual abuse	29	104.71	
	Economic abuse	30	143.50	
	Psychological abuse	27	171.74	
	Total	186		
Religion:	Physical abuse	74	87.00	
	Emotional abuse	26	122.60	
	Sexual abuse	29	96.78	49.23 (4), p=0.000
	Economic abuse	30	87.00	
	Psychological abuse	27	87.00	
	Total	186		
Duration of relationship:	Physical abuse	74	51.16	
	Emotional abuse	26	76.50	
	Sexual abuse	29	94.71	147.36 (4), p=0.000
	Economic abuse	30	142.50	
	Psychological abuse	27	170.19	
	Total	186		
Number of children:	Physical abuse	74	58.05	
	Emotional abuse	26	150.00	105.28 (4), p=0.000
	Sexual abuse	29	150.00	
	Economic abuse	30	85.00	
	Psychological abuse	27	85.00	
	Total	186		

Table 5 indicates that unemployment/financial stress was the most commonly reported driver of domestic violence (21.5%), followed by infidelity (19.4%), while mental illness was least reported (2.7%). More than half of respondents (55.9%) affirmed that their partners engaged in substance abuse, compared to 16.1% who reported otherwise. Regarding socio-cultural influences, a majority strongly agreed that cultural beliefs (52.7%) and economic hardship (51.6%) promote violence within the home.

Table 5: drivers of domestic violence

	Frequency (%)	Total (%)
In your opinion, what are the major causes of domestic violence in relationships?		
Alcohol/drug abuse	20 (10.8)	**186 (100)**
Unemployment/financial stress	40 (21.5)	
Infidelity	36 (19.4)	
Cultural beliefs/gender roles	29 (15.6)	
Poor communication	30 (16.1)	
Mental illness	5 (2.7)	
Jealousy and control	26 ()	
Has your partner ever abused substances (alcohol or drugs)?		
Yes	104 (55.9)	
No	30 (16.1)	**186 (100)**
Occasionally	52 (27.9)	
Do you agree that cultural beliefs encourage violence in homes?		
Strongly agree	98 (52.7)	
Agree	81 (43.5)	**186 (100)**
Disagree	5 (2.7)	
Strongly disagree	2 (1.1)	
Do economic difficulties (e.g., joblessness, poverty) contribute to domestic violence?		
Strongly agree	74 (39.8)	
Agree	96 (51.6)	**186 (100)**
Disagree	11 (5.9)	
Strongly disagree	5 (2.7)	

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant relationship between educational level of Respondents and occurrence of domestic violence among couples in Nnewi, Anambra State.

Table 6: Linear Regression analysis of the relationship between educational level of respondents and domestic violence

Model Summary

					Change Statistics		
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1
1	0.836[a]	0.699	0.697	.82554	0.699	427.063	1

Table 7: Linear Regression analysis

Coefficients[a]

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-0.618	0.163		-3.785	0.000
	Educational level:	1.495	0.072	.836	20.665	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Forms of violence have you experienced

Statement: There is no significant relationship between the educational level of Respondents and domestic violence among couples in Nnewi, Anambra State.

Test statistics: Linear Regression analysis

R=0.836; R^2= 0.699, *p-value*= 0.000

Alpha (α) level = 0.05

Judgement: Since *p<0.05*, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion

The findings from the study revealed that all the respondents (100%) have experienced one form of domestic violence or the other, with physical abuse (39.8%) and economic abuse (16.1%) being the most prevalence (Table 2). The result proved that domestic violence, especially physical abuse is a menace among couples in Nnewi Anambra State. Table 4 result showed that monthly income, religion, duration of relationship, and number of children had a significant association with domestic violence among couples (p= 0.000). The findings from the study (Table 5) showed that unemployment/financial stress (21.5%) and infidelity (19.4%) are the major culprit of domestic violence in relationships among couples in Nnewi, Anambra State. More so, majority of the couples of DV in Nnewi were known to be substance abusers as affirmed by 55.9% of the respondents, while cultural belief (52.7%) and economic difficulties (51.6%) were the key drivers of DV. This is in line with the findings of Okunlola et al (2024) who noted that partner alcohol use, lower education, poverty, and community norms accepting wife-beating were significantly associated with higher odds of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). The findings are consistent with those of Fidan & Bui (2016), who identified husbands' alcohol use, unemployment, and patriarchal norms as key drivers of DV.

Conclusion

This study on Domestic Violence was carried out to ascertain those trends and drivers of DV among couples in Nnewi Anambra State. The study is delimited to trends, drivers, and resolution strategies among legally married couples and co-habiting couples in Nnewi, Anambra State. A cross sectional survey research design was employed in the study, and a sample size of 186 couples recruited as subjects. The findings from the study showed that couples in Nnewi experience DV in form of physical abuse, economic abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, and emotional/verbal abuse, which are as a result of unemployment/financial stress, alcohol/drug abuse, infidelity, low education, and cultural beliefs/gender roles. The victims of DV in Nnewi, experienced long lasting consequences like physical injuries, loss pregnancy, low self-esteem among others., and the victims resort to informal system of report due to fear of losing their marriage or social stigma. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended integrated interventions.

References

Chika, R. O., & Onyemachi, P. U. (2022). Sociodemographic correlates of intimate partner violence in South-East Nigeria. *Journal of Public Health Research and Development, 9(2), 101–109.*

Fawole, O. I., Okedare, O. O., & Reed, E. (2021). Home was not a safe haven: Women's experiences of intimate partner violence during the COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria. BMC Women's Health, 21, 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-021-01233-w

Fidan, C & Bui, A. (2016), Intimate partner violence against women in Zimbabwe. *Journal of International Development, 34(4). https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3637*

Jewkes, R.,Flood,M. ,& Lang, J. (2015).Norms and reduction of inequalities in gender relations:a conceptual shift in prevention of violence against women and girls. *The Lancet*, 385 (1580-1589). https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736 (14)61605-4.

Nigeria National Population Commission (NPC) & ICF. (2019). Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2018. Abuja, Nigeria, and Rockville, MD: NPC and ICF.

Ndie, E.C, Osuagwu, B.T. & Agbo, J.O. (2018). Evaluation of nature of domestic violence and coping strategies adopted by women suffering domestic violence in Anambra State of Nigeria. *Convenant International Journal of Psychology, 3(1).*

Okonkwo, C., & Eze, B. U. (2023). Women's coping strategies with domestic violence in Igbo. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Health and Well-being, 18(1), 224–239.*

Okunlola, D.A., Adebowale, A.S., & Olanrewaju, R.O. (2024). Patterns and correlates of intimate partner violence against women in Nigeria: Insight from recent

nationally representative data. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 21(4), 456. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph21040456

Taber, K. S. (2018. The use of Cronbach's Alpha in developing and reporting research instruments in science education. Research in Science Education, 48, 1273-1296.

World Health Organization. (2021). Responding to intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women: WHO clinical and policy guidelines. Geneva: WHO Press.