INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV) AND POSITIVE LIFE OUTCOMES: NARRATIVES AND EMERGING TRENDS IN IBADAN, SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a major social problem that is widely dispersed geographically and seen as an aberration of expected behaviours. Empirical documentation of IPV has reported its negative effect on the female gender which is psychological and physical on their health. Also, IPV has been documented as a constraint against female gender achievement and development. This constraint is entrenched in a patriarchal society where male dominance is the ideology inculcated in individuals irrespective of their gender. However, this study investigated IPV in the context of female gender emancipation and empowerment, which has a dearth of knowledge in empirical studies. Structural Functionalism and Social Action Theories aided the theoretical framework. This was a cross-sectional study that utilized both exploratory and case study as methods for data collection. The selection of respondents was done through snowballing of victims who have liberated themselves from their IPV lived experiences and demonstrated positive life outcomes. In all, nine case studies were researched. Thematic and content analysis were used to analyse the qualitative data. This work emphasized the views of IPV is socially constructed and this has implications for the interpretation given to it by the social actors either as a source of strength or weakness in their pursuit of achievement and development. Also, social institutions are impactful in the actualization of these outcomes. Based on findings, the patriarchal nature of the Traditional African Societies seems to be under stress of its conservatism in modern times as indicated in the experiences of the abused women who have been able to re-channel their life course.

Keywords: *Intimate Partner Violence, Social Institutions, Female Gender, Life Outcomes, Nigeria*

INTRODUCTION

Womanhood is a facet of diverse identities whose image replicates nurture, care, humility, warmth, support and understanding. She is said to be a symbol of admiration resulting from her tenacity, bravery and superlative achievements as narrated by writers in the quest of reconfiguring the womanhood most especially in a geographical space dominated by the male gender which is conspicuous in the African society (Nwiyi and Edache, 2020). The Success rate of women's achievements is being documented but there still exists the window of marginalisation informed by the socialisation process invariably with the construction of male and female gender. A process that dates to the birth of religious ideology and the imposition of colonialism (Akoleowo, 2021). The marginalisation for some of these women is brought on by the societal expectation of their roles and responsibilities which has span through the ages up till this contemporary period.

The voices of battering of womanhood had been a subject of discussion wherein, their vulnerability to violence is said to be the norm which in some societies, is rationalised. Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a global health problem having one in every three women experiencing it according to the statistics of World Health Organisation (2021). Over the years, IPV has grown to be a severe global menace with long term effects on the physical, mental, social well-being of its victims (Oluwole et. al., 2020; Tennakoon et. al., 2020; Okedara and Fawole, 2024) which transcends to their social and economic well-being as well as having effect on their children (Issah et. al., 2022; Jofre-Bonet et. al., 2024). Hence, IPV includes "any physical violence, sexual violence, stalking and psychological aggression such as coercive tactics of any kind by a current or former intimate partner ranging from spouses, boyfriend or girlfriend, or an on-going sexual partner" (Oram et al., 2022, Khokhlova et. al., 2023). These inhumane actions cover a wide range and level of abuse by its perpetrators such as shouting, physical abuse (beating, kicking, or slapping), non-consensual sexual activities (Kabir et.al, 2019), psychological abuse (intimidation

and humiliation), monitoring of intimate partner movement, restriction from family and friends (Oluwole et. al., 2020). Other type of coercive behaviours identified by literature include control of the victim with respect to routine and finances as well as deprivation of basic human need such as food, clothes and shelter (Fawole et. al., 2021; Rafiq et. al., 2023).

It is, however, worrisome in the developing nations with Africa having incidence rates. This is challenged to be a hindrance to achieving the Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs) most especially in developing nations (Coll et. al. 2020; Tesfaw and Muluneh, 2022). This violence is multifaceted in Nigeria, because it has different dimensions of engagements which transcends beyond the individual and extend to the society at large. At the centre of this dilemma is the status of the female embodied by the cultural norms of the society (Benebo et. al. 2018; Aluede & Uche 2023). Nigeria, the largest and most populous black nation shoulders a large percentage of this problem due to the acceptability of a pro-male dominance which is aided by the traditional norm (Fawole, Okedare and Reed, 2021). With a weak social sanction, poverty and social norms that values IPV are tagged as community and societal factors that promote IPV. Generally, being a patriarchal society there is the interplay with culture thus resulting in the construct of gender inequality (Mshweshwe, 2020; Okunade et. al., 2023).

Women on the other hand are expected to acclimatise to the male dominance which influences their social, physical, and psychological wellbeing (Akoleowo, 2021). A disheartening act with documentation on empirical studies has failure of reporting the perpetrators by the victims due to fear of marital problems, insecurity for the children, economic dependence etc. (Mshweshwe, 2020; Oluwagbemiga et. al., 2023). However, it has been documented that women do exercise authority through various channels which range from family, religious, political, and even economic domains. In such instances, this can be depicted as matriarch in the family, women lead organisations, spiritual leaders and even queen mothers (Sheldon, 2017). In other discourses the ideology on the subjugation of the female gender is universal which of course is on the bases of biological reasoning, providing rationale for the arrangement of the world social order. Oyewunmi Oyeronke further postulates that this is central to its invention by the western culture which was further institutionalised during colonialisation of other cultures (Oyewumi, 1997). According to her, this makes gender a rethink of the western construct.

Review of literature on the social phenomenon IPV, highlights dearth of documented studies on the lived experiences of IPV victims and their positive live outcomes after such dehumanising experience. This was the research gap investigated and documented in Ibadan, Southwestern part of Nigeria. The Research Questions posited were the nature of IPV, experiences, root causes, the role of the social institutions, and surmounting the travails to interrogate the social phenomenon.

Theoretical Thrust

Structural Functionalism and the Social Action Theories were applied to elucidate on how social behaviours are socially constructed through the functions of the social system and the rationality informing the actions embarked on by the social actors involved vis-à-vis the IPV.

Structural Functionalism

The concept of Structural Functionalism is deeply rooted in the premise of a functioning society aimed at achieving order and equilibrium. It relates all parts of the social system working in synergy to improve the standards of society holistically. Radcliffe Brown (1940) in his work highlights that the social system which consists of structures maintained by social life which includes the existence of social groups such as (family, kinship, social sanctions, etc.), internal structure of groups, social classes arrangement, social distinctions, are dyadic relationship arrangement, interactions between person sand groups such as (social processes involving co-operation, conflict etc.). Hence, social structures control and shape the social behaviours of

individuals and groups through social institutions such as the family, education, religion, economy, politics.

The family plays its role through the socialisation process by inculcating into the individual the norms, roles and expectation in society. The African culture and child socialisation process is patriarchal which provides a frame for gender inequality, unequal power, entitlements, and responsibilities (Azuike, 2020). Hence, men construct their identities with masculinity which hinges on patriarchal privileges with uneven power relations to dominate and control women because they are socialised to perceive themselves as superior to women who are defined to be feeble-minded (Izugbara, 2004). However, families have also been a source of refuge and support for victims of violence where victims are welcomed back to their parents' home to avoid severe consequences such as the loss of life in an extreme condition. A review of literature further posits males have a supportive relationship with women irrespective of their socialisation to dominate which is contrary to the dominance of patriarchy (Sikweyiya et. al. 2020; Onwugben 2023). Violence, coercion, and treats are strategically employed to subdue women. Hence, gender inequality ravages every area of life including family decision-making process, resource allocation, political representation, work, power struggle, etc. Therefore, women in a traditional or cultural society with unequal gender-related ideologies are defined to adapt to patriarchal stereotypes.

The Educational Social system is said to be the best legacy parents and society can give the generation of tomorrow (Adara and Onyemaechi, 2018). Gender violence as aforementioned is prevalent amongst uneducated women but more prevalent amongst women who are more educated than their male partners. This sets a woman academically above the men. In a patriarchal society where men's ego is of huge importance, the woman is at a high risk of experiencing abuse. This is in attempt to subdue her and remind the woman of her subordinate position, hence, "*he is still the man*". Also, education enlightens women which gives them an edge to stand up for themselves when they feel threatened (Ahinkorah et. al., 2018; Oluwagbemiga et. al., 2023).

There is a nexus between the culture and religion with respect to IPV. Religious institution which prohibits divorce is hinged on the Holy Scriptures which forbids against the act of divorce. This ideology subjects' victims of abuse to endure abusive relationships which can result to injury or loss of lives. On the contrary, religious organisations is symbolized as a place of sanctuary for victims of abuse. To some, it is considered an escape route away from the physical and psychological stress the victims face. Religious organisations provide social supports to victims in terms of offer of prayers, provision of basic need and other forms of social support services (Nason-Clark et. al., 2018; Hoston-Kloink et. al. 2019; Akangbe, 2020). Furthermore, religion is perceived to be an agent of social control against deviant actions such as violence against intimate partner. According to literature, religion and spirituality helps partners to be morally upright which can help reduce the occurrence of violence amongst intimate partners. Also, being occupied with religious activities such as bible studies, church services etc. reduces IPV as it impacts empathy in people (Istratii & Ali, 2023).

Intimate Partner Violence is greatly associated with individual economic standards. Review of the literature document that women who are at risk of abuse are women from low-income and middle-income classes, who are financially dependent on their partners for financial support (Ahinkorah et. al., 2018). This unsubordinated behaviour places the victim in a vulnerable position to be abused. Victims largely suffer from psychological abuse such as coercive control from abuser who monitors the daily routine and activities of their partner. An economically independent woman is averagely respected by her partner and hence, is less likely to be abused. A decrease in female unemployment relative to male unemployment raises IPV and this could result to insecurity on the part of the men.

Women in politics assume a role of power which puts them at par with IPV or less susceptibility to experience abuse. However, women are subdued by gender socialisation to be subordinate to men which puts them at a disadvantage. Irrespective of the political role of a woman, the masculine stereotype outweighs her position to acquire or inherit a man's property. Furthermore, political organisations such as government agencies create awareness on the consequences of IPV on victims. The formulation of policies by global and national agencies aimed at curbing IPV is crucial to achieving sustainable development goals. Legal actions are put in place to curb the menace (Onyemelukwe, 2018). However, more stringent legal actions are used to deter abusers perpetuating inhumane actions irrespective of the cultural beliefs of the society, which is patriarchal, accepting male dominance over females.

Social Action Theory
Max Weber viewed human actions and behaviours in a subjective manner from the stance of the agent responsible for such actions. In this context, the term "meaning" can refer to either the meaning intended by an individual or by a group of individuals for a specific reason. Actors have goals and objectives; therefore, they choose suitable methods to achieve them; their actions are influenced by the situation and driven by symbols, norms, and values. The most critical category is interaction, which refers to behaviour directed at other people. Social actions are defined not only by their context and intent, but also by their agreement with social norms, structures, and attitudes (Weber, 2023). Even the actors' mere taking of a position in space and time when engaging with their social environment has an indirect effect on or consideration of other people. Deeply rooted in the works of Max Webber, he opines that social actions are individuals' subjective meaning and rationale behind their actions. The subjectivity attached to meaning makes individual or group actions social. Hence, individual or groups attach assumed or suitable meaning to behaviours. Social Action Theory underlines the role of morality in understand the rationale behind violent behaviours of perpetrators to victimize their intimate partners. Moral and immoral behaviours are concerned with the outcomes of actions which can be good or bad (Barton-crosby, 2018).

Social Action Theory opines that IPV is learned especially because of childhood exposures to violence. Children largely learn by imitation; hence, a child observes adult behaviours and imitates the adult who is seen as a role model. During a child's developmental stages, children exposed to any form of violence begin to socially construct their perception of violence and assume justified meaning of their dehumanising actions as a normal situation. For example, male children who grow up to see their mothers have been beaten by their fathers tend to reciprocate such aggressive behaviours in society in the future. Also, women who grow up to see their mothers being beaten, might learn to accept violence as an acceptable form of social control. However, exposing children to IPV can have a reversed impact where victimized children socially construct a reversed perception of violence such as growing up to be actively against IPV (Kelly, 2019). Therefore, perpetrators of violence socially construct their actions irrespective of its intended or unintended outcomes and justify their behaviours by the socially acceptable cultural norms and values which are entrenched with the masculine stereotype.

METHODOLOGY
The study which was Cross-sectional Research Designed was Exploratory and Case studies. The method of data collection was qualitative with an In-depth Interview guide deplored as the research instrument. This was a grey area explored with respect of empirical documentation of the positive life outcomes of these IPV Victims and the notably roles of the social institutions. Nine

case studies[1] were conducted, with the selection of the interviewee gotten through snowballing within the study area, Ibadan. Ibadan is a Metropolitan city in Oyo State, Nigeria with the state label as *Pacesetter State.* The emblem given to the State as a *Pacesetter* is informed by her list of establishments, the first of its kind in the country and are situated in Ibadan. These establishments include the first University, University of Ibadan; Television Station, Western Nigerian Television (WNTV); University College Hospital etc. Ibadan, situated in the Southwest of Nigeria is home to people of different ethnicities, and most prominent of the residents are Yoruba ethnic group. The ethical principle of respect for persons was adhered to which was inclusive of voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality obtained from the interviewees. The data elicited from the interviewees was content analysed thematically in line with the research questions of the study.

FINDINGS
Silent Scream in a Patriarchal Society
The researchers elicited from the interviewees their experiences regarding submission, subjugation, and respect for the male. These were depicted in different instances such as decision-making on finances and spouses being allowed to make the final decisions. According to one of the interviewees who is a senior civil servant in her place of work:

> You know I do not see any big deal if my husband must make decisions on behalf of the family. I mean this was what I learnt from my parents when growing up. If my ex-husband tells me back then that I was not permitted to attend a social function with my friends, even if I try appealing to him and he remained adamant on his decision, well who am I to question his authority or decision back then? Most times I felt hurt, and it was unfair. **IDI/Civil servant/43yrs/Separated.**
> At a point in time, I was bored with just being a housewife and I tried repeatedly to make my former husband consent to me having a shop. He turned down my request and instead told me my hands are already full with taking care of him and our two kids, two boys precisely. He never saw reason that I also wanted to have something doing aside from taking care of the home. This hurt me because I would have expected my parents to give me their support on this. Instead, I was told that after all my husband provides for my need. I mean can you imagine that from one's own parents. **IDI/ Entrepreneur/ 52yrs/Remarried.**

Even when it comes to infidelity, which was mostly reported by the interviewees, it was said to be the norm as it is the societal expectation if a man engages in extra-marital affairs he will be pardoned. An interesting recount given by one of the interviewees is stated below:

> My ex-husband informed me that a lady was pregnant for him. It was painful because this was a marriage not up to one year. I was upset and in tears pleading with him to tell the lady if she will not abort the pregnancy, I am ready to raise the unborn child for him. Of course he

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[1]The Case studies comprised of respondents with different socio-demographic characteristics who are all resident in Ibadan.

declined. By the time his uncle came to wade into the matter, he called me a barren woman and that I am not an accommodating woman, saying so what if your husband impregnates another woman? **IDI/Lecturer/44yrs/Remarried.**

For this respondent it was accepted being a practice that is supported by the Islamic Religion

Being a practicing Muslim and raised in a Muslim home, my estranged husband was indeed having an extramarital affair. Although I am the fourth wife and I expected that he would not be involved with other women aside from my senior wives that seems not to be the case. I cannot really fault him because my own religion Islam, gives room for this. **IDI/Trader/48yrs/Separated.**

Root Causes of IPV

Empirical studies have been conducted which investigated on the root causes of IPV. Few of the cases interrogated by the researcher insinuated the personality of their spouse as being the origin of the IPV they experienced in their previous relationship.

You know some persons who are far older than me, mentioned that my ex-husband must have felt in secured with me, in fact he shouldn't have married a pretty lady like you they say. This instigated his repeatedly physical and emotional abuse just to assert his authority as the man in our relationship. **IDI/ Lecturer/44yrs//Remarried.**

My husband was brought up in an abusive relationship which he experienced by his parents. Yes, I had knowledge of this childhood background because he told me, and I felt he would not fall victim. But then some years into our relationship, more so, when I started making progress with my career which got me more occupied and he had lost his job, he became hostile and domineering. He even started suspecting me to be involved in an extramarital affair. **IDI/Lecturer/51yrs/Remarried.**

Role played by the couples' family can either progress positively or exacerbate the situation of the marital relationship. This was also observed by the researcher in the study.

I was lucky to have a family who took me in when I left the marriage. My father in-law was not fully in support basically because of our intra-ethnic differences, though from the same Yoruba Ethnic group. So, when their son started misbehaving and his father was called on, he never resolved our marital conflict and was always stating that we both saw each other, and we should resolve whatever differences we are having. Even in situation when his son beats me, he does not scold him. My own family on the other hand was too docile because they did not want me to have a broken marriage. They eventually consent to me leaving the marriage after their

efforts   of   trying   to   reconcile   us**.**
IDI/Lecturer/44yrs/Remarried.

Issues on ethnic background and religious differences was mentioned by the interviewees as root causes of the IPV experienced. Below are the excerpts from the study.

> I complained to my parents' in-law on their son's abuse towards me, but I always met brick wall especially from his mother who claimed I am too proud and not submissive to my husband.
> **IDI/Civil Servant/43years/Separated.**

> I am from a Christian background, and this was accepted by his own parents because they are Muslims. Things started taking a different turn when the imposition of their own religion was being enforced on our children, two boys. Whenever the boys attend church with me, it was a really big problem. Funny enough he and I both had this understanding right from the inception of our relationship that I would be allowed to practice my own religion. **IDI/Civil Servant/43yrs/Separated.**

> My parents were not in support of my marriage because of our religious differences but I insisted and had my way. Moreover, he promised that the issue of our religion will not be a problem. He deceived me because after my first child, male was born he insisted that I must convert to his own religion. **IDI/ Estate Agent/48yrs/Separated.**

An interesting narration elicited in all these root cause of IPV was witchcraft, which is of supernatural powers. These could not be proven empirically by the researchers, but the interviewee gave instances why she suspected witchcraft and the source been her mother-in-law.

> My ex-husband and I genuinely loved each other from the onset of our relationship. My mother-in-law pretended to accept me. However I observed each time she came visiting, my husband and I will have serious fights on issues that are insignificant. Of course, I went spiritual and was told my mother-in-law was a powerful woman. I had my peace when I moved out of the relationship leaving behind my children which were against my will. **IDI/Secretary/58yrs/Separated.**

Experience of the Abused

The highlight of the research were narrative accounts of the IPV experienced by the victims. The cases studied revealed their experiences as victims of IPV.

> The first time I experienced abuse by my ex-husband we were still dating, then he slapped me and apologised promising it would never happen again. But this was not the case as I continually experienced this. After marriage, he cut me off from seeing friends and my family. He was always suspicious of me and if he asked me any question with my response not permissible to him, I get beaten. I was beaten at some point with neither of us not knowing

that I was already pregnant. I was only lucky not to lose the pregnancy. **IDI/ Lecturer/ 44yrs/ Remarried.**

My ex-husband had always beaten me especially during a slight provocation or misunderstanding. In one of those times, he had beaten me, and I managed to escape from him. He was chasing me inside our compound, but I managed to escape miraculously by climbing the fence of our house**.** Mind you had lost a pregnancy earlier in one of these scenarios. **IDI/ Lecturer/47yrs//Remarried.**

When my former husband lost his job, there was hardship and stress on me because I had to provide house rents, feeding and upkeep of the family and even put money in his pocket. He started staying out late and would sometimes stay away for weeks and when he comes home, he becomes violent picking up fight at any slightest utterances. In one of those times, he practically dragged me on the floor in the presence of our children. I was saved by our neighbour. **IDI/Civil Servant/43yrs/Separated.**

Another interesting account of one of the narrated cases was a given by a mother of two children who claimed her ex-husband wanted to use her for ritual. Of course this was her words against her ex-husband.

He had been acting strange of late and had moved out of our room into the guest room. At some point I went into the guest room to clean, and I saw the Bible passage he was reading with instructions. He was reading Bible verses on Jeremiah, who is a prophet of lamentation, and I was asking within myself if he was told that I was the source of his problem. It was the same day that I discovered the pot of charms which was placed on top of the wardrobe. I cannot explain why I checked the top of the wardrobe. This discovery led to our separation as I knew I was no longer safe with him. **IDI/Sales Agent/ 49yrs/Divorced.**

Reconstruction of the Abused Personality

The abilities of the interviewees to build their lives after the violence experienced was shared with the researchers. What is of importance in their narrations is the will power for a positive outlook coupled with the role of the social institution, with emphasis on the family. The belief in oneself went a long way to help these victims. Ability to restore their self-confidence paved the way in the reconstruction of their shattered personality.

The day I decided to walk out of my marriage after being battered, I looked at myself in front of the standing mirror and I said to myself that I am still beautiful despite already given birth. I just summoned up courage and I left the marriage. **IDI/Civil Servant/43yrs/Separated.**

The family social institution played a crucial role in helping these victims. In their recounts, all gave a positive support which ranged from shows of love and care, finances, and prayers they received from their family. Below are excerpts.

> I was running a postgraduate program when my marriage collapsed having no job and saddled with my baby. My father after accepting me back home asked what I wanted to do with my life, I told him I want to further my studies which he supported by selling his shares. The rest is history as I completed my postgraduate program up to the Ph.D level. I even got a job as a Lecturer. This would not have been possible if not for my family especially my father who took me in and never saw me as a disgrace cause of a failed marriage. **IDI/44yrs/Lecturer/Remarried.**

> When I initially moved out of my marriage, my father paid for my accommodation. You know I was a resident and working in a different state from that of my family of orientation so I could not come and live with them. This really helped me to gather enough savings. More so, thank God I already had a job**. IDI/ Estate Agent/48yrs/Separated.**

DISCUSSION

The African mind and soul have been socialised to abide by the norms of her rich and revered culture. Such soul is channelled in line with the construct of male and female gender with its role status expectation. The cultivation of one's personality is such which starts with its growth from the family social system or institution going through the different phases of socialisation process. In the book of renowned novelist, Emecheta Buchi, who depicts the identity of the African woman, riddled with patriarchy and racism. Her argument challenged how the patriarchal system subjugates the position of the female gender thus making them a *second-class citizens* in their own geographical space transcending beyond the family social institutions. A personality is thus created which depends on the conceptualization of the traditional philosophy or ideology (Emecheta, 1974). The marginalisation of the female gender in humans most especially in a patriarchal society date back in history. For instance, religious doctrines are objectified to uplift the status of the male gender above the female documented and depicted by different religions. In the Christian tenets, from the inception of the creation of the world, the female is a creation of the Lord to serve as a help mate to the male. This is stated in Genesis, the first Book Chapter of the Holy Scripture.

> And the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him" Genesis 2:18.

Thus, insinuating that the female is expected to play the supportive role to their male counterparts. Furthermore, religious prescription codified in the Bible counselled wives to be submissive to their husbands. This is elaborated in Ephesians 5: 22-25 thus:

> Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Of course, the female is not only submissive to her husband but also to the church and community at large. Similarly, in Islamic religion, a female is objectified as property of the male, expected to perform the household chores which could deprive them of their self-worth when compared. Segregation does exist at the prayer ground with women allotted separate places to pray. Similarly, in other religious doctrines, females are relegated to the background and are not allowed to hold leadership positions in religious gatherings. Furthermore, due to their biological makeup, during menstruation, females are excluded from performing some religious rights as they are claimed to be unclean (Adegoke & Owoseni, 2018). The Nigerian Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) study reported participation of women in decision-making (healthcare, household purchase and visitation to family and friends) had reduced from 47% in 2013 to 37% in 2018. This further emphasises the impact of cultural subjugation of the female which was reported from the study. The NDHS (2018) study also documented the decision-making empowerment of these women to increase with age, level of education and wealth. The more empowered the female is, she will want to be involved in decision-making and this seen to challenge the decisions of her spouse thus resulting to IPV (Ahinkorah et. al., 2018; Coll et. al, 2020).

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) can be in different forms resulting in psychological, sexual and physical harm. A form of domestic violence wherein the victim is in an intimate relationship with the perpetrator. The female are most often the ones at the receiving end of these violence most especially in a patriarchal society which is male-dominated (Okedara and Fawole, 2024). Interestingly, the social act of IPV is normatively encouraged as it is embedded in the conceptualization of patriarchy and perception of the female (Ike et. al., 2023). Understanding the epidemiology of IPV is germane to reducing this social problem in the society, because the root causes of IPV experienced by the victims do differ. As discussed by the researchers in the early part of this paper, there is a history behind gender inequality which stems from the Theological Age, with the mentality of submission being the keyword. Further on this, historians such as Toyin Falola, had also documented gender inequality and abuse emerging with the inception of colonization. There existed a sexist nature of segregation which adversely led to the uprising of renowned women protests namely Aba Women Riot of 1929 and Abeokuta Women Revolt in 1946. However, theoretical analysis on this said social phenomenon has been linked to the advent of capitalism wherein other challenges such as sexual assault and harassment; domestic violence; exclusion from privileges like education and employment; inequality on remuneration etc. emerged (Fagunwa, 2020).

There are other root causes of IPV which have been documented and findings of this current study had equally corroborated few of these earlier studies. For instance, few of the cases interrogated by the researchers insinuated the personality of their spouse as being the origin of the IPV they experienced in their previous relationship. These had been documented in other studies (Tchokossa et. al. 2018; Collison and Lyman, 2021), where IPV is said to be multidimensional with a socio-ecological framework. The role played by the couples' family can either progress positively or exacerbate the situation of the marital relationship. Literature has documented the interference of family in intimate relationship (Clark et. al., 2010; Sigalla et. al., 2018). Other identified root causes from previous studies are ethnic background, religious differences as well as residential influence IPV (Dim, 2020; Oduaran and Chukwudeh, 2021), as this was also reported in the current study. The issue of spiritual force igniting IPV was mentioned in the study, however this cannot be proven. It does bring to the front burner the question of spirituality and it's place as a root cause of IPV.

Narrative accounts of IPV that was experienced by the victims highlights on the outcome of such violence which had resulted into death, maim and or psychological breakdown as documented by earlier studies (Oluwole et. al., 2020; Okedara and Fawole, 2024). Their experiences could have been averted from the onset of the relationship. The tell-tale signs will be disrespect to one's partner which could be physical, verbal or emotional. Expectation is the noncompliance to such

behaviours which serves as a pointer on the direction of the relationship. Furthermore, the female is wired to be receptive and accommodate shortcomings of the male often with the mindset that such animalistic act will cease to exist in the future. These were few of the orientations of the female which were exhibited in the supposed management of their relationships. As earlier stated about spiritual force with emphasis on witchcraft inflicted on by a significant other, the act of ritual practice by spouse perceived by one of the interviewees highlights on this social phenomenon to be beyond physical, verbal and or emotional abuse. This was a traumatic experience for the person concerned and this places a quantum of trust in relationships. The crux of this research documentation is the findings on how these abused women from IPV forged ahead in life while maintaining a positive life outcome despite their experiences. There are published works documenting the impact of IPV which have adverse effects on the individual such as depression, suicidal tendencies, alcohol and drug abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, disability etc. (Bacchus et. al., 2018; Oloyede, 2020). They were able to pick up their lives because of different influencers that energized their ray of hope, more so that all is not lost. Different factors made this possible and this the victims shared. The belief in oneself went a long way to help these victims. Ability to restore their self-confidence paved the way in the reconstruction of their shattered personality. That which was pertinent in the reconstruction of their lives was the support from their families. The assistance received varied and was inclusive of finances, spiritual, emotional, and social supports. This has been under-reported in literatures with attention given to the negative consequences of IPV.

Conclusion
The findings from this research have shown that social institutions historically had been a strong force in instigating IPV either directly or indirectly through the ideology of male dominance in the patriarchal system. The mentality of the social actors involved was socially constructed based on their interaction with the environment. To have an insight into IPV in Nigeria, there is the need to understand the milieu of cultural beliefs which stimulates the hierarchical role of male dominance in intimate relationships. Despite been at a disadvantage in this context as a female, it is believed by some female not to report the cases of IPV and as such should be treated and resolved within the family. Furtherance on this is the role of religions with its ideology. The emphasis on the social acts by the actors involved, notably the perpetrators and the victims are masked by the teachings of the respective religions. Although with the level of globalisation and the use of tools such as the social media, the civil society organisations, criminal code of justice, cases of IPV are gradually declining in the society. There is a need of reawakening self-confidence in the IPV victims. Some of the identified key steps which seem to aid the emancipation of these victims were their ideology and principle about the positivity of life aside from the support given by the social system. Their empowerment equally gave them the prowess to take decisions that were strategic to their goal to succeed despite all odds, and this was achieved with the support of the same social system. In furtherance, creating more awareness of SDG 5, which focuses on gender equality and empowerment is an effective strategy for the abolition of IPV.

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