Socio-cultural factors that predispose women to victimisation in family matters

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Abstract

Victimisation of women is a global occurrence, which comes with a host of consequences for women and the entire family system, especially in Nigeria, where the patriarchal tradition gives much priority and authority to men at the expense of women. This study examined the sociocultural factors that make women prone to victimisation in family issues that affect them. Based on the qualitative research design, an indepth-interview guide was used to garner data from fourteen married tutorial and non-tutorial staff of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka Campus, who comprised seven males and seven females aged between 30-60 years old. Data were analysed with NVivo 12 software, and findings showed that culture, educational status, and low self-esteem are the factors that cause victimisation; Psychological problems and family instability are the resultant effects, while legislation, giving women equal access to resources and mass reorientation of the society about women's rights are the possible remedies. The study concluded by recommending that women should seek professional social work and medical support in extreme cases of victimisation and that the law should adequately enforce the rights and privileges of women.

Keywords: cultural, family matters, social, victimization, women

Introduction

Gender-based violence is a global social issue that constitutes serious public and social health problems affecting women and girls in families from all socioeconomic backgrounds and cultures (Kaur & Garg, 2008; Beydoun, 2012; Ellsberg et al., 2008; Randle & Graham, 2011; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000; World Health Organization [WHO], 2013). Intimate partner victimization [IPV] is any form/act that results in physical, sexual, psychological/mental harm or stalking that includes the use of force and unreasonable denial of freedom meted on one intimate partner which includes but is not limited to slapping, forced intercourse, intimidations, emotional blackmail, etc (Breiding et al., 2015; Mutiso et al., 2010; Niolon et al., 2017; Oladepo et al., 2011; United Nations, 2013). Contemporary women's

victimisation in family settings tends to increase because of our society's patriarchal nature of unequal power dynamics in male-female marriages (Heise, 1998; Uwameiye & Iserameiye, 2013). A report by WHO (2020), shows that violence against women is more prevalent than violence against men because of the cultural support for the gender roles assigned to women by men. Victimisation of women disproportionately affects women with low financial means and low educational attainment (Igbokwe et al., 2012), and it severely limits women's capability to contribute to home and family matters, to benefit from the rights and liberty in marriage on an equal footing with men and their capacity to express concern for the wellbeing of the family as a whole (UN, 1993). Victimisation occurs in thirty percent of homes and one out of every three women globally will or has experienced it with over 60% of them witnessing physical assault from their partner at least once in their lives (Alokan, 2013; Pilay, 2011). A report from Ethiopia shows that 71 percent of their married women experienced at least one form of abuse with 35 percent of them being subjected to serious physical abuse like being struck with a fist or other object, whipped, burned, hard kicked, or frightened with a weapon (Gurmu & Endale, 2017). Similarly also, vicitmisation affects over 35.1 percent of women from the Igbo tribe and 34.3 percent of women from the Hausa-Fulani tribe in Nigeria because of their patriarchal system (Oladepo et al., 2011), and as a result of this, victimisation of women is either unseen or acceptable as a societal norm in these areas (Agbogu & Igbokwe, 2015). Also, Adebayo (2014) study in South Asia shows that 60% of women in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and 50% of women in Afghanistan face constant victimisation and assault in their homes. This abuse is typically tolerated and justifiable for several reasons, such as having more girls, having arguments with husbands, leaving the house without the spouse's consent, and failing to properly look after the children (Oyeoku et al., 2013).

The patriarchal nature of Nigerian society, and educational and economic factors, among others, continue to hold sway in sustaining men's dominance over women, including victimisation. Nigeria is a patriarchal society, meaning the male gender has a traditional right to rule, control, and decide on all issues, especially marriages and family issues. Thus, strict cultural practices, bridewealth, the conception of womanhood and gender role indoctrination have encouraged the victimisation of wives in Nigeria's patriarchal setting from the pre-colonial era to the present times (Arisi & Oramoreghe, 2011). Patriarchal standards are likely to strengthen and impact many men and women's conception of women's victimisation as inevitable and justifiable in family problems as well as fostering the reoccurrence, intensity, variety of abuse and domination of spouses via terror and threat (Igwe, 2015; Luckson, 2014). Unequal allocation of power, rights and privileges in marital partnerships, use of force including women's victimisation to protect male dominance over women, the submissive role of

women to their spouses, male headship in the family, societal ideology that assigns women's position as nurturer has also been identified (Onyediran, 2016; Gurmu & Endale, 2017; Muomah, 2010; Azuh et al., 2015). Tenkorang et al., (2013) suggest that, although wife dominance is bad for women's health and well-being, it is usually seen as a sign of a man's authority and love for his wife. Nigerian culture seems to impact the perception of male and female victimization and acceptance of it as justified in society. This is because marriage is seen to be a permanent social and spiritual connection between husband and wife and their different families and it is regarded as an indissoluble contract (Arugu, 2014). Identified also are the educational and economic factors. According to Tenkorang et al. (2013), the benefits of education include self-confidence, individual social empowerment, useful knowledge about life, and the capacity of one to use knowledge and resources effectively. Therefore, insufficient education and lack of resources weaken women's capability to oppose abuse in the face of immediate dangers and the possibility of being battered to death by their husbands (Uthman & Moradi, 2009; Chuma & Chazovachill, 2012; Fakunmoju et al., 2016).

Theoretically, some victimization within the family setting can be aptly explained as a learned behaviour using social learning theory (Powers et al., 2017). The theory is on the assumption that experiencing violence in one's own family or family of origin increases the chance that the person will be the perpetrator of intimate partner violence (Banduras, 1977) and it is frequently learned through observation of parents and peer interaction during childhood (Wareham et al., 2009). The observation reproduces a sequence that is referred to as intergenerational transmission of violence because children are exposed through interactions and observations, to the culture of hostile behaviours against the woman or partner (Akers & Sellers, 2009). However, beyond the mere individual family experience, the sociocultural context of the family could also play a fundamental role in making the learned behavior practicable or otherwise (Lopez, 2018). This study, therefore, is anchored on an attempt to understand in detail, the socioculturally linked factors that manifest in the family to reproduce female victimisation as learned behaviour and how the disparity effect of education of husband and wife can address the question of whether the learning that takes place during education can override the victimisation tendencies learnt within the family.

In the Nigerian setting, strategies such as the use of undertaking for caution, alternative dispute resolution, and organization of sensitisation programmes and lectures have been reportedly used by social workers in some parts of the country to address domestic violence cases among women (Temilola, 2020). However, these attempts are basically reactionary with minimal effort at resolving the root cause and sociocultural factors that shape the abuse and

how it is learned within the family settings. Mullender and Hague (2005), point out the lack of a statutory sector of social welfare that addresses the abuse of women in their own right by targeting the conditions enabling and supporting the abuse. Even within existing support systems, the organization and arraignments of the support often discourage abused women from seeking help (Estrom, 2016). Therefore, there is still a need to address the role of social workers in intervening, not just in reported cases of domestic violence, but how the profession could promote long-term plans that will address the sociocultural enablers of domestic violence.

Many studies have dwelt on the establishment of violence against women in many countries like Nigeria, Malaysia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana etc as seen in the study (Aloka, 2013; Chuma & Chazovachii, 2012; Gurmu & Endale, 2017; Mutiso et al., 2010; Tenkorang, 2014). However, these studies did not give in-depth interrogation of women's victimisation as a learned behaviour that could vary across sociocultural indicators like education and family system as well as the social worker's role in tackling the menace associated with violence against women. Therefore, the present study sought to ascertain; (1) What sociocultural factors expose women to victimisation in family matters? (2) How does victimisation affect women and family stability?

Methods
Study design
The qualitative research design was adopted. This helped the study explore deeply (Bryman, 2016) the level of victimisation, opinions, and experiences of married staff in family issues at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka Campus. The focus on married staff from the university is because the university has a large sample of married couples from heterogeneous sociocultural backgrounds and educational statuses. Therefore, the variations in cultural backgrounds will help to obtain experience-based narratives on how women's victimisation plays out in different family systems and educational backgrounds since different cultural background supports different family systems and values on how women should be treated. By analysing data from such heterogeneous groups thematically and building logical explanations of observed differences and similarities; the study hoped to offer new findings that will further improve the applicability of the theoretical framework, rather than be reduced to its basic assumptions as posit by Gobena and Hean (2019).

Study area
The study was conducted at the Nsukka Campus of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The University is Nigeria's first indigenous and autonomous university, founded in 1955 and started formal operation in 1960 (Onuoha, 2016). The campus consists of 15 faculties and 102 academic departments. It offers 82 postgraduate programs and 211 undergraduate programs. The total

number of staff, as contained in the 2022 nominal roll obtained from the Personnel Department of the University, is 9,490. Out of the 9,490, 4,429 are female while 5,061 are male. However, those eligible for the study, aside from being staff of UNN, are also married staff from both teaching and non-teaching cadre.

Sampling procedure and data collection
Fourteen married teaching and non-teaching staff aged 30 to 60 (seven males and seven females) were purposefully sampled for the study (n=14). Married participants were chosen because they were considered to have accumulated significant experiences in family matters. Even though the sample size was small (n=14), the qualitative nature of the study made it fit to provide enough information to attain data saturation (Nelson, 2017). Other criteria for selecting participants were that the person is married, and were willing and available to participate in the study.

An In-depth interview guide comprised of 10 questions and probes was used to source data from the 14 participants through telephone calls. This was used to enable the researcher to dig deeper into any interesting points mentioned by the respondents during the discussion. Open-ended questions were formulated by the researcher allowing participants to share their experiences in detail freely. Interviews were in-depth, which allowed the discussion to shift toward new issues raised by participants that were not initially considered by the researcher (Hammersely & Atkinson, 2007). The researcher talked to as many married workers as necessary, seeking their participation in the study. Upon acceptance, before the interviews commenced, the participants were duly informed that the information they would give would be used exclusively for research and academic purposes and that they would be kept anonymous. They consented orally to this before the interviews commenced, which aligns with the ethical requirements for qualitative research (Bryman, 2016; Pittaway et al., 2010). The interviews lasted an average of 35 minutes each and were recorded with smartphones. The study was approved by the Ethical Review Board of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Data analysis
The data collected were transcribed verbatim by the researcher and her assistant and then coded into the NVivo 12 software where themes emerged. Themes were used to help clarify responses to the research questions (Lopez et al., 2008), which agrees with the methodology in social research that entails adopting thematic clusters to gain insight into lived experiences (Creswell, 2013). The analysis focused on the participants' views rather than the means of expressing their views; hence, attention was shifted from how the participants said what they said to what they said (Riesman, 1993). Themes

that only the researcher or her assistant identified were scrutinised by both, making reference to the transcripts. Such themes were either accepted or rejected, depending on whether the theme had enough supporting evidence from the research questions and the transcribed data. This helped ensure that findings were not influenced by the researcher's or her assistant's biases and prejudices. The participants were given pseudonyms such that "FM, M, 48" denotes a 48-year-old male participant with the pseudonym FM.

Results
Demographic features of participants
A total of fourteen (14) participants were sampled for the study. There was equal representation of males and females, and participants comprised both tutorial and non-tutorial staff of the University of Nigeria. All participants were married. The table below presents further details about the participants

Table 1: *Socio-demographic characteristics of participants.*

Gender	Pseudonyms	Work category	Age	Years of marriage	Place of residence
Male	UE	Tutorial staff	52	24	Campus
Male	AA	Tutorial staff	52	20	Campus
Male	MD	Tutorial staff	55	30	Campus
Male	VO	Tutorial staff	51	28	Campus
Male	EG	Non-tutorial staff	54	30	Campus
Male	EJ	Non-tutorial staff	47	15	Off campus
Male	GE	Non-tutorial staff	45	10	Campus
Female	MM	Tutorial staff	50	20	Off campus
Female	AR	Tutorial staff	49	18	Off campus
Female	IC	Tutorial staff	58	35	Off campus
Female	TM	Non-tutorial staff	48	20	Off campus
Female	TY	Non-tutorial staff	52	22	Campus
Female	IJ	Non-tutorial staff	40	10	Off campus
Female	AV	Non-tutorial staff	51	25	Campus

Factors that encourage Victimisation of women
The participants identified several factors to be the drivers of victimisation of women; Culture, educational status, and Low self-esteem were the perceived predominant factors.

Culture
Results showed that the patriarchal culture prevalent in African societies particularly Nigeria, keeps women inactive. A good number of participants revealed that this culture bestows dominance on men and makes men feel that women can never have equal rights on issues that affect the family. Women

must not challenge men's decisions and must not expect to be the chief decision-makers. Two participants narrated thus:

> First is the cultural factor, where men are given all the power and control over women. He is seen as the lord and, therefore cannot be questioned or challenged over decisions not favourable to their wives. The woman must seek the opinion of her husband before she does whatever she wants. The men use the power and domination given to them by culture to subjugate their wives into doing anything they want without objection **[MM, F, 50].**

> Within the African worldview, African society tends to support the victimisation of a woman generally. Culturally, women are expected to endure those victimisations. It is only in extreme cases that society intervenes, and with the institutionalisation of the British legal system, a woman can also seek redress in a law court **[EJ, M, 47].**

It was equally revealed that any attempt to resist victimisation or exercise power on the part of women leads to more victimisation. The man feels that the woman is challenging his authority which poses a threat to him, and as such, he tries to shut her up in ways that constitute victimisation. An excerpt from a participant's narrative supports this:

> The factors influencing women's victimisation include but are not limited to dominance, power and strength, which are seen to be masculine attributes for men, while qualities such as submissiveness, passivity or tolerance are characteristics assigned to women. So when a woman starts to display power and strength, it could lead to victimisation probably because the man feels that the woman should not be displaying such qualities in family matters **[UE, M, 52].**

Educational status
Findings revealed that the educational attainment of either the husband or wife in a family goes a long way in determining the level of victimisation of women that would occur. Participants disclosed that if the woman is not educated, she would be ignorant of many things, and would not have the exposure and courage to stand up against victimisation from her husband. She may not even know in the first place that she is being victimised, especially in a society like Nigeria, where the culture of masculinity makes victimisation seem like standard practice. A participant explained thus:

> Women are not allowed to acquire an education. In most cases, women are just free to maybe acquire basic education but not to go further to acquire tertiary education/higher degree because men see it as a threat. But you will find out that when a woman is educated, she is better informed, they know their rights, they know that their life

> does not entirely depend on their husband, and they have to stand on their own. You find out that lack of education is now a barrier to women's freedom. So I think poor or low education or an entire lack of education is also an influence on victimisation **[AR, F, 49].**

On the other hand, if a man happens to be the one who is not educated, he feels insecure and sees his wife as a threat to his authority and dominance, which makes him victimise his wife in a bid to maintain his sovereignty over the family. However, if educated, the man will understand the need to respect and treat women equally. The statement below reflects a participant's view.

> Education on the part of the man determines the level of victimisation because the more educated the men are, the more understanding they have that women should be treated equally and women should be loved and cared for, and that equal access to resources should be given to women. Also, you see situations where the society itself will not give equal economic opportunities to women, and even political opportunities are not given to women **[TY, F, 52].**

Low self-esteem

Low self-esteem was found to be one of the propellers of the victimisation that women suffer. Women do not see themselves as having equal rights with men. Participants revealed that women have the ideology that they are at the receiving end and are not meant to have the best things in life. This self-image makes them relax and submit to anything meted out to them by their husbands. In the following narratives, participants described how women think low of themselves and put themselves at risk of victimisation.

> Then another thing is that women themselves think low of themselves. Experience has shown that women think that they should not have the best things in life, so that ideology of life also make them see themselves as a slave who doesn't need to be free, who does not need to have her own life, who does not need to be happy and to explore the world but who will have to be there and be at the receiving end **[IJ, F, 40].**

> The problem is low self-esteem. This has made the women not believe in their ability to lead themselves. They think that men are superior and they can never measure up to them. Some will even say that is how God made it, and it should be so. So, these women are partly the cause of their own problems; in fact, they victimise themselves by the way they look at themselves, which reflects in their attitude **[GE, M, 45].**

Effects of victimisation on women and the family system
Victimisation was found to have regrettable effects on women and other components of the family system, such as children. Psychological disturbance and family instability are the two major themes here.

Psychological disturbance.
Victimisation results in psychological and emotional problems such as depression, anger, antagonism and hatred in women. Constant victimisation puts women at the risk of breaking down emotionally, with feelings of regret and deep dejection. Results showed that in extreme cases, women feel so depressed to the point of having suicidal thoughts and commit suicide if adequate attention is not paid to their concerns. A participant noted:

> It has psychological effects. Some women tend to become depressed; some can go to the point of giving up on life. It can lead to physical separation, like leaving home. It can lead to the transfer of aggression on the husband. A woman who is victimised and cannot retaliate to the direct object of the victimisation could look for soft targets like kids, and also, it can lead to mental problems lead to a serious negative impact on the mental health of the woman **[IC, F, 58].**

Further expressing the effects of victimisation, participants explained that it affects the woman's social life and consequently takes some psychological toll on her.

> Victimisation weighs a woman down psychologically, mentally and emotionally. Depression can also set in, thoughts of suicide or divorce come in, her social life becomes affected, and fear sets in. when her social life is affected, it will definitely affect the social life of other members of her family especially the children. The home becomes boring, they will start living as strangers, and even the children will start living in fear and will automatically be weighed down emotionally **[AV, F, 51].**

The psychological problems that women suffer, directly or indirectly affect the children, who are often more attached to their mothers. The psychological problem was found to have ripple effects. A participant expatiated:

> Victimisation affects not just the woman involved but also their children and families. These effects include harm to an individual's health, possibly long-term harm to child development and harm to communities such as lost man hours and destitution. The psychological or mental health consequences of victimisation on women can include but are not limited to depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance use or abuse and sleep disorder,

and all these have consequences for the children presently and in the future **[AA, M, 52].**

Family instability
Victimisation was found to cause a collapse of family bonding, separating spouses and children. Results showed that when victimisation of the mother occurs habitually, the peace, love, and discipline that initially bound the family together withers. Children experience violence, and may turn violent against their future partners. When a woman is victimised, she becomes withdrawn, threatening family stability because women play significant roles in family stability. Participants aired their views in the following utterances:

> The effect is that when a woman is victimised, she crawls into her shell, and when this happens, it greatly affects the stability of the family. It also affects the children who are witnesses to the act. The family will not be stable as there won't be peace and cooperation as it ought to be in a family. This affects both the children and the husband. The children may not be given proper training because already the woman is damaged and someone who is damaged cannot do things right **[TM, F, 48].**

> The effect is that there will be in-family fighting and low self-esteem on the side of the woman; there may be segregation between boy and girl child in their upbringing in the family. The family will no longer be together; sometimes, you see either couple telling the children that the other person is evil. This tears the family apart because when children grow up with such mindsets, they may love one of their parents at the expense of the other. Victimisation is a chief cause of dysfunctional homes, and the consequences are not always desirable **[MD, M, 55].**

Remedies to women victimisations in Africa and Nigeria.
Victimisation of women can actually be minimized. Giving women more access to resources, making laws that would protect the interest of women, and societal reorientation were suggested to be potent solutions.

Equal access to resources
Analysis showed that giving women equal access to education, jobs and opportunities would change their self-perception, give them confidence, and make them more exposed so they can stand up for themselves in the face of victimisation. Since lack of education and economic resources has been found to be one of the drivers of victimisation, an attempt given to women's educational empowerment would help curb it. Participants reiterated this:

> Victimisation against women in the family could be prevented by strengthening women's access to basic human rights and resources.

Research shows that communities with more access to education, jobs, housing, health care and equality for both men and women have lower rates of victimisation against women. We should also raise awareness of the dangers of harmful orthodox traditions **[EG, M, 54].**

Promoting gender equality and providing proper education on human rights can help address the issue of victimisation. When women are empowered, I believe they can fight for themselves in their families. They will be less afraid of their husbands, and they will know what to take and what to reject. Knowledge is power they say **[VO, M, 51].**

This empowerment can also start from the foundational level of womanhood by giving the girl child necessary and quality empowerment such as education and skills. A participant suggested:

Educating the girl child to become a leader and also contribute to family matters will help a lot. This can be done by involving women and female children in the decision-making process of the family, which helps to build their self-esteem, confidence and capacity of the women to lead, and also give the women the same opportunities as men **[EJ, F, 47].**

Legislation

A significant number of the participants think that if the government enacts laws that would protect women's rights and implement them accordingly, the victimisation of women will be reduced. Where such laws already exist, they should be made very active to deter men from abusing women.

The government can play a role in stopping women's victimisation by making laws that ensure compulsory women's education with scholarships. Also, the government can appoint women in every facet of governance to help showcase their ability to lead. Lastly, the government should enact laws that protect women against victimisation and ensure that offenders of the law are punished to deter others from the doing the same **[UE, M, 52].**

The government can do something in this instant by setting up specific agencies to ensure that they implement laws that will protect women from victimisation from their husbands. Here the state can decide to establish a family court though in Lagos, where some of the victimisation issues of women can be handled with some level of speed at a very minimal cost **[GE, M, 45].**

Societal reorientation

From analysis, if victimisation must stop, society has a role to play. Part of the reason behind the menace is how society perceives women, and until these changes, the problem may prevail. Society needs mass reorientation so they can see the relevance of women and begin to look at them with an eye for equality. The narratives below are suggestive of this:

> The day society will cease to see women as the weaker sex and cannot take decisions that concern them without permission from their husbands, victimisation will reduce. Even at the point of serious injury, society will still blame a woman for not obeying before complaining. Society should start seeing women as just like men and not as slaves who will always be at the beck and call of the husband. Women should also be accorded respect just like men, and their roles should be redefined **[TY, F, 52].**

> The society can help curb the victimisation of women, even in family matters, by promoting gender equality to prevent victimisation against women. Also, society can help women to become economically independent. Educating women on the roots of violence as well as raising awareness of the dangers of harmful traditions is important **[MM, F, 50].**

Apart from a change in mindset, society needs to get rid of the patriarchal tradition that makes men almost demigods and start to involve women adequately in the decision-making process of the family **"**society can play a pivotal role in curtailing women's victimisation by abolishing patrilineal family tradition which is the bedrock of women's victimisation in the family*"* **[IJ, F, 40].**

Discussion

Victimisation of women is a global issue that has adverse social and health implications for women (WHO, 2013). Several sociocultural factors have been found to be responsible for this, which necessitates the need to pay more attention to how it happens in different parts of the world. This study explored the socio-cultural factors that predispose women to victimisation in family matters and more importantly, how these factors are learnt within the prevailing cultural system to ensure intergenerational transfer of the abuse.

Results revealed that the victimisation of women in Nigeria has cultural underpinnings transferred through learning as men are culturally vested with authority and respect at the expense of women. Women learn the act of withdrawal, with a feeling and mindset that it is natural to endure maltreatment from men. This strengthens the practice of women victimisation and its inherent effects. Consequently, the finding aligns with an earlier

position by Uwameiye and Iserameiye (2013), which showed that women's victimisation results from the patriarchal system of unequal power relationships in marriage between men and women. The systemic nature is therefore sustained through a culture of role observation and learning because boys learn the attitudes of their fathers while daughters learn from their mothers (Bandura, 1977). Through this, patriarchal standards strengthen the victimisation of women and make men see it as justifiable (Igwe, 2015). It is therefore safe to argue that inherent in the patriarchal system is a learning process that promotes subjective role placement of women. As argued by Wareham et al. (2009), women's enforcement of masculine roles and family headship is often perpetrated in the presence of the children who grow up embracing the norms and materialising the same in their later life. The sequence referred to as intergenerational sequence by Akers and Sellers (2009) is found in the current study to be sustained by a lack of education among women and men. For example, it was found that when women are uneducated, they are ignorant of their rights and how to enforce it, which creates enabling social context of continuous abuse. There have also been reports of instances where women tend to see themselves as naturally inferior to men and have no right to challenge their decisions in the family matter (Azuh et al., 2015). Invariably, when the man is uneducated, it reverses the inferiority complex and creates a situation in which the man struggles to defend himself by constantly asserting his masculine authority in ways that could result in abuse and women victimisation.

Nevertheless, the report on education and women is that educated women stand fewer chances of being victimised because they have knowledge of their rights, privileges and also have the courage to advocate for themselves. This is congruent with the findings of (Igbokwe et al., 2012), which revealed that victimisation disproportionately affects women with low educational backgrounds and low-income status, and Tenkorang et al., (2013), which showed that education brings about social empowerment, valuable information about life, self-confidence, and the ability to use information and resources to one's advantage. It is equally on the basis of education that a long-term intervention plan of social workers to address the sociocultural enablers of women's victimisation in the family setting could be pursued. Whereas previous interventions such as caution undertaking and sensitisation (Temilola, 2020) have been purely reactionary; institutionalising compulsory orientation training for married couples as a necessary step of marriage registration can be domiciled within the social welfare unit. The orientation training will also promote knowledge of the emotional and psychological implications of victimisation of women to further serve as deterrence. This is based on the findings that there is a need to promote awareness of the family dangers posed by victimisation of women in the family setting. Medical social

workers as part of their responsibility can also utilize counseling opportunities to encourage women to speak up on situations of abuse. For example, a report by World Health Organization on violence against women categorized women victimisation as a serious public health problem (WHO, 2021). Therefore, counseling women on the need to speak up is a pertinent form of social reorientation, which the current study found that it could minimize the degree of dangers women are exposed to.

In the aspect of the implications of vicitmisation of women that could guide such social intervention, the current study found that victimisation of women has emotional and psychological implications for the women and their children. It disrupts their social life and as a result, makes them withdrawn. They feel depressed to the extent of contemplating suicide, and some suffer anxiety, aggression and other emotional disturbances. This finding aligns with a study by Alokan (2013), which expressed that the victimisation of women subjects them to serious physical, emotional or mental assault by their husbands or their immediate and extended family members. This equally agrees with the findings of the studies of (Breiding et al., 2015; United Nations, 2013), which disclosed that victimisation of women by their husbands causes emotional blackmail and psychological problems that result from victimisation, there is a high risk of family instability; children witness violence and may grow up to see it as normal, reinforcing the victimisation cycle when they begin to maltreat their spouses. When a woman is constantly victimised, she may not be actively involved in raising children and home keeping, which can crumble the family system because women contribute significantly to the unity of every family (Oyeoku et al., 2013). It is therefore imperative to integrate these wider implications as part of the pre-marital orientation programmes of social workers at social welfare units of different local government areas in Nigeria and also in the counseling guides utilized by different medical social workers to advise women on how to prevent victimisation in family settings.

This study was not without limitations. Firstly, given that it is a qualitative study, the researcher focused on the detailed narrative of the topic under study, rather than generalization. Secondly, the study focused on couples within the University of Nigeria. There is therefore a need for further studies in this regard, which could cover broader regions. Finally, because the interviews were conducted on the phone, some vital non-verbal clues were not observed. This may have influenced the findings of the study.

Conclusion
The rate of victimisation of women in Nigeria is high. This has been found to have serious mental and psychological implications for women, threaten family stability, and affect the children either presently, in the future, or both.

But of pertinent concern in the current study is the intergenerational channel through which such social problem is sustained, specifically the informal learning process that takes place in the family settings through observation and role placements. Furthermore, whereas sociocultural factors like education, marital rites/procedures, and gender values were indicated as having a direct impact on women's victimisation in the family settings; this study concludes that the patriarchal legal system by reflecting oppression is at the center of all forms of the victimisation it creates toxic masculinity in men by culturally recognizing them as superior under whose authority the women must submit and containing same in dominant religious beliefs. The idea of superiority it fosters, further makes it more difficult for women to stand up against victimisation in the family setting since they are expected to submit to their spouse. Also, since the patriarchal system reflects the dominant legal provisions in Nigeria, social workers can improve their response to the needs of victimised women through individual and system advocacy or institutionalised pre-marital orientation programme as a necessary step for marriage registration in Nigeria. Therefore, this study recommends that married women should not bottle up their ordeals in family settings and continue to suffer. Rather, they should seek the professional support of social workers, who are experts in family intervention, and also the services of psychological experts in instances where they feel their emotional peace is at risk.

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