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FROM SILENCE TO RESISTANCE: UNVEILING MALE DOMINANCE AND VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA THROUGH THE LENS OF CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE'S *PURPLE HIBISCUS*

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Abstract

This article explores male dominance and violence in Nigeria through the lens of Chimamanda Adichie's novel, *Purple Hibiscus*. Socialist feminist theory and post-colonial feminist theory were used as the theoretical framework, and feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) was used to analyse the data with the aid of Atlas.ti software. The study sought to create awareness of gender inequality, suggest ways of combating violence against women and female suppression, and promote new conceptualisations of masculinity, femininity and inequality. It also explored how language was used in the construction of gender identity and how this reflected male dominance and violence in Nigeria. This FCDA study of male dominance and violence in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* was conceptualized as a result of the gender inequality that is prevalent in Nigeria. This study attempted to increase awareness of the existence of male dominance and violence in Nigeria, which has implications for the continent.

Key Words: male dominance, violence, feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA), gender inequality, gender equality, socialist feminist theory, post-colonial feminist theory, ATLAS.ti

Introduction

This feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) of male dominance and violence in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* was conceptualised as a result of gender inequality that is prevalent in Nigeria. Makama (2013) argues that the patriarchal nature of traditional Nigerian society, which enables men to dominate women, continues to impact negatively on the participation of women in informal and formal decision-making contexts. However, Anunobi (2002) argues that women play an important role in the development of countries, hence all forms of discrimination against them need to be opposed. Although, Ejembi and Mnyim (2020) find that discrimination against females is a common phenomenon in most African countries including Nigeria, Stromquist (2014) finds that gender-oriented stereotypes exist in virtually all cultures, leading to increased violence, mental illness, reduced life expectancy and poor educational attainment for the marginalised gender. Hence, Bofu-Tawamba (2015) calls for more research on the current position of women in developing countries owing to their sub-standard position. As a result, this research intended to increase awareness of gender inequality, suggest ways of combating violence against women and female suppression as well as promote new conceptualisations of masculinity, femininity and inequality. This research study chose to focus on Nigeria through the lens of Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, which reflects the dominance of the male gender and violence in Nigerian society. FCDA was applied to analyse and interpret the actions against the female characters in the novel, which reflect the prevalent male dominance and violence. McHugh and Cosgrove (2004) argue that FCDA as a framework for feminist research aims to

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give voice to women's experiences, reveal and overcome androcentric or patriarchal biases, using research as a tool for emancipation and social change. This research work chose FCDA as its methodological approach and socialist feminist theory and post-colonial feminist theory as its theoretical framework. It also analysed the themes of male dominance and violence in Nigeria as represented in the novels of Chimamanda Adichie, respectively, using a FCDA approach.

The findings of the study are not generalisable and only specific to this study, but they aim to contribute to awareness of and changes needed to challenge the many issues that contribute to male dominance and violence in Nigeria. Ridgeway (2011) claims that gender standards and discrimination strengthen the inequality between men and women. In addition, gender equality in the Nigerian situation is a disputed concept owing to the strong influence of culture, patriarchy, tradition, and religious responsiveness. This is a result of culture being closely associated with oral myths, rituals and age-long customs that predate colonial rule which maintains gender inequality and discrimination. Over the years, women's activism has attempted to address the gendered stratification of Nigerian society and has targeted practical gender needs such as freedom from domestic violence, sexual harassment, equal access to properties and overcoming the subordinate position of women to men in the society.

Gendered context of male dominance and violence in Nigeria

Nigeria is positioned in the West African region of Africa with an estimated population of about 162 million people, which makes it the highest populated country in the Africa continent. Nigeria gained independence in 1960 following British colonial rule that began in the mid-19th century. It is a multi-ethnic society encompassing a wide variety of cultures, languages and religions. As gender inequality is a characteristic of Nigerian society, males on average, are better positioned in social, economic and political hierarchies (Makama 2013). Ridgeway (2011) also claims that gender standards and discrimination have strengthened the inequality between men and women.

Gender equality in the Nigerian situation is a disputed concept because of the strong influence of culture, patriarchy, tradition and religious responsiveness that challenge the realisation of gender equality (Durojaye and Adebanjo, 2014). In relation to gender, culture is the agent of socialisation or conditioning through which males and females internalise societal values, develop their concepts of self, and identify with members of their respective gender groups. As such, "culture is a powerful tool for the reproduction of meaning, social relations, classification, and power configurations" (Woodard, 2012:12). For example, cultural practices such as female genital mutilation do not only affect the feminine gender negatively, it is also hazardous to a woman's health. In addition, over time, lack of educational accessibility has been inhibiting women's socio-economic empowerment in Nigeria while patriarchy is also a major feature of traditional society in Nigeria, favouring men and disadvantaging women.

Female suppression is rooted in the essential nature of male and female identity. Nigerian men tend to use natural, cultural and religious justifications for discriminatory treatment of women and girls. This is due to the patriarchal culture in third world nations, where males are more valued than females and females are viewed as subordinates. Moreso, parents choose to educate their boys rather than their girls owing to the belief that female education is a waste.

Consequently, for the sake of social and economic development, coupled with the fundamental human rights, gender equality is crucial for the growth of a country. To achieve the Millenium Development Goal 2 and Millenium Development Goal 3 objectives, Nigeria needs to revamp its affirmative action plan and focus on attaining gender equality. As a result, more research is necessary on how gender difference is viewed in Nigeria to help to provide enlightenment to emancipate women. This study, therefore, has built on the concept of feminism as presented in two feminist theories (socialist feminist theory and post-colonial feminist theory) to identify the root causes of gender inequality as a means to reduce it. Having briefly explored the gendered context of male dominance and violence in Nigeria, the next section discusses the theoretical underpinnings of this research work.

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Theoretical underpinnings

A theory is considered a systematic set of interrelated statements intended to explain some aspects of social life (Rubin & Babbie, 2016). Selecting socialist feminist theory and post-colonial feminist theory as the theoretical framework of this study facilitated the understanding of gender inequality from the aspect of male dominance and violence. For socialist feminist theory, until the economic and cultural sources of women's oppression come to end, liberation or gender quality cannot be achieved (Holmstrom, 2002). As such post-colonial feminist theory is a set of essential viewpoints on the legacy of colonial rule, which focuses on the combined effects of racism and colonialism, and emphasises the roles and representation of women in the post-colonial period. The core of post-colonial feminist theory is to uncover, reveal, illustrate and transform ideological and social structures that sustain inequalities between native and non-native populations (Bell, 2016). Post-colonialism and feminism are interconnected because they pursue similar goals of transformation. Post-colonialism discusses the suppression of native people in the colonised societies, while feminism is concerned with the suppression of women in the patriarchal society. Socialist feminist and post-colonial feminist theories address women's challenges holistically, by focusing on oppression comprehensively and not just as one of the problems. These two theories are considered suitable for the analysis of male dominance and violence in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* because they help in the intense understanding of the basis for male dominance and violence against women.

Methodology

Conducting research has to do with how to organise a problem and how to go about solving it. Vyhmeister and Robertson (2020) define research as a careful study of a subject to discover new facts or information about it. Methodology is defined as a set of methods and principles used to perform a particular activity; therefore, research methodology is a careful study to carry out special results by following proper or predefined rules and methods. There is no definite right or wrong approach to any research, but researchers are compelled to employ an approach that can offer relevant answers to the research questions or issues under examination (Berger & Lockmann, 2002). Since applied language is often said to be concerned with solving or at least ameliorating social problems involving language (Trappes-Lomax, 2004), this study determined to answer the identified social problems of violence and male dominance through the research methodology using feminist critical discourse analysis.

This research work used a qualitative research design to answer identified social problems of violence and male dominance by utilising the analytical framework of feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) to analyse the novel *Purple Hibiscus*. FCDA bonds feminism with critical discourse analysis and aims to advance a rich and nuanced understanding of the complex workings of power and ideology in discourse, which sustain (hierarchically) gendered social arrangements. The aim of FCDA is to show up the complex, subtle, and sometimes not so subtle ways in which gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged in different contexts and communities (Lazar, 2005). FCDA is unique and different from CDA because it focuses on how gender ideology and gendered relations of power are (re)produced, negotiated and contested in representations of social practices, in social relationships between people, and in people's social and personal identities. For Lazar (2005), FCDA is a form of analytical activism that focuses on gendered discourses where women lack power and are being dominated. It aims to question the pre-determined roles of women and reconstruct conditions that can bring women and men onto an equal platform. Therefore, this research study used FCDA to analyse male domination power relations in a novel.

The research strategy adopted was the narrative inquiry research strategy, which is based on the research philosophy and methodological choice. Narrative research is a type of qualitative design in which narrative is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event or action or series of events or actions, chronologically connected (Elliot, 2005). As there are four approaches of carrying out narrative inquiry as a research strategy, the study was able to select the approach that best suited the focus of the research questions, namely, thematic analysis narrative approach in which content within the text is the primary focus.

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This qualitative research study used secondary data to provide evidence of male dominance and violence in Nigerian societies through the lens of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. The data analysis process was conducted using FCDA as the methodological framework with ATLAS.ti software.

FCDA as a methodological approach

This study used FCDA to review the gendered discourses, which sustained and reinforced a patriarchal social order. For Lazar (2007) any work undertaken by critical academic feminists can be regarded as academic activism, and FCDA constitutes a form of analytical activism. As a result, FCDA is a methodological approach that enables an understanding of how institutionally produced discourse can be used to create transformation in society. This study used FCDA as a methodological tool for studying the selected texts, which are comprised of gendered discourses that sustain a patriarchal social order. Lazar (2005) also argues that FCDA is a bond of feminism with critical discourse analysis and aims to advance a rich and nuanced understanding of the complex workings of power and ideology in discourse in sustaining (hierarchically) gendered social arrangements.

For this qualitative research study, the researcher will be relying on secondary data only which means that the researcher, in the present study employed the secondary data for this research work. The main source of data is considered a secondary data because the data relied on for this research work are derived from the novels of Zakes Mda (*Madonna of Excelsior*) and Chimamanda Adichie (*Purple Hibiscus*). Hither to the choice of the data source, the researcher established the likely availability of the data and the evidence of male dominance, and violence which are elements of gender inequality and all forms of discrimination against the female gender in the novels.

FCDA was used to illuminate the unequal power relations between male and female gender, which has caused society to consider one gender as superior to the other. This research work used a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software tool, ATLAS.ti, to analyse male domination power relations in novels. It used FCDA as a methodological approach to explore, challenge, resist and change sexual and social inequalities in society. The key feminist research ethic is reflexivity, which enhances its reliability. Personal reflexivity is the process through which a researcher recognises, examines, and understands how their own social background intervenes in the research process. it is further acknowledged that the interest of the authors in feminist research was influenced by their experiences from childhood to marriage, society and in the work environment.

Findings and discussion

This section deals with the feminist critical discourse analysis of the discourses in the novel, which were relevant to this study, namely, male dominance/patriarchy, and violence/female suppression. The novel, *Purple Hibiscus,* written by Adichie, was selected for this study because it centres on the effect of colonialism on Africans and female oppression in Nigerian novel and, as such, reflects the happenings in Nigeria after World War II.

Purple Hibiscus is structured by beginning in the middle of the action with parts of the novel narrated in the past tense. The narrator, Kambili, who is eighteen years old, narrates what happened to her and her family when she was fifteen. The novel is about the anguish and pain of women because of male dominance and domestic violence. The novel is divided into four main sections, and each section has a number of chapters that are not numbered or titled. Each section centres on an important phase in Kambili's story. The four sections in the novel are entitled:

- Breaking Gods - Palm Sunday
- Speaking with Our Spirits - Before Palm Sunday
- The Pieces of Gods - After Palm Sunday
- A Different Silence - The Present

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The structure of the four parts is entangled with the first sentence in the novel, "Things started to fall apart at home" (Adichie, pg 1). As the first sentence depicts, so it is with the novel's narrative style where the events in the novel are disjointed.

The first section of the novel introduces Jaja's refusal to attend communion, and Papa's reaction, which results in the first conflict in the novel. The second section entitled "Speaking with Our Spirits" takes the narrative back to the time before Jaja's refusal to attend communion. The third section is a continuation of the first section, which gives a better understanding of the first and second sections, while the last section is written in the present period.

The tense employed in each section of the novel indicates the period of the narration in the novel. The period of narration in the first three sections of the novel happened in the past, hence the use of past tense, while the last section of the novel indicates the present period of the narration of the novel, hence the use of present tense with the title "The Present".

The goal of using a FCDA approach in the study, was to alleviate gender inequality in society and provide social justice for the female gender who are being subjugated and oppressed in society (Lazar, 2007). Consequently, FCDA is useful in giving voice to the marginalised, suppressed and silenced voices to attain gender equality for peaceful co-existence and development of society, especially in Nigeria. Analysed through the lens of FCDA, which critically investigated the othering and exploitation of the female genders in *Purple Hibiscus*, which reflects the subjugated and dominated life of women in Nigeria, and their feministic resistance to their oppression. The FCDA analysis of *Purple Hibiscus* was carried out based on two themes, namely, male dominance/patriarchy and violence.

Theme of male dominance/patriarchy

Male dominance often entails female subordination and exclusion, and Jewkes (2002) argues that African countries are patriarchal because dominant males have control over females. In this section, the theme is discussed by considering instances of male dominance and patriarchy in the novel.

Relegation of women

The African patriarchal system has led to the relegation of women in many forms, such as being ignored, mistreated, punished and ejected from marital homes. This relegation has deprived women of their freedom and liberty, and has been responsible for their poor self-esteem, as well as low levels of achievement and participation. Papa Nnukwu in *Purple Hibiscus* portrays the relegation of women by referring to women as being insignificant. For example, he instructs the females in the car not to look at a masquerade because women are prohibited from looking at masquerades (Adichie, pg 59). Papa Nnukwu also snaps at Jaja for speaking like a woman, implying that women are assumed to be inferior to men and that women are referred to as the less intelligent gender who exhibit irrationality when they speak (Adichie, pg 61). This is a day-to-day occurrence in Nigerian patriarchal society whereby the female gender is not expected to be heard, hence decision-making is left to the men.

Another instance of the relegation of women in the novel is provided by illustrating female disinheritance in Nigeria, which is an offshoot of patriarchy and gender inequality (Adichie, pg 65). For example, Igbo customary law in Nigeria favours the father and male descendants at the expense of the female gender. Moreso, one of the women in the novel desires to "sell" her daughter off to Jaja owing to the privileges he possesses as a result of his privilege to his father's inheritance. For Chika and Nneka (2014), Igbo customary law propels gender inequality because of its stand on female disinheritance whereby a woman does not have any right to inherit any of her deceased husband's or father's property. Oni (2014) notes that the customary law in Nigeria is patrilineal in nature by favouring the father and male descendants at the expense of the female gender. This is an example of total marginalisation of the female gender and the portrayal of "otherness" and "nothingness" that this study sought to redress.

In the novel, *Purple Hibiscus,* Beatrice tells Ifeoma to allow the children, especially the boys, to be familiar with their father's homestead and the members of their father's Umunna after the demise of Ifeoma's husband

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(Adichie, pg 53). This supports the view that boys are more important in the family circle than girls, hence the need for the boys to know their father's homestead and the members of their father's Umunna.

Helpless state of widows

Being a widow in Nigeria is not a pleasant experience because apart from the pain of the loss of a dear one, it is also a form of discrimination against the female gender. The predicament of widows in Africa cannot be underestimated because of the patriarchal society (Osezua & Agholor, 2019). Adichie (pg 53,178, 179) describe the challenges women face after the death of their spouses, such as food insecurity, lack of good shelter, failure to find basic health and school necessities for their children. The novel exemplifies that in a patriarchal society like Nigeria, women are forced to rely on men for their livelihood and women are not allowed to have paid jobs. Yewande Coker and Aunty Ifeoma are two examples of widows in the novel who face a series of victimisation and discrimination from their husband's relatives after the demise of their husbands. Aunty Ifeoma is alleged to have killed her husband, and her husband's relatives insist that she must bring her children to the family house of her deceased husband. These instances illustrate the vulnerability of widows in Nigeria. Chika and Nneka (2014) argue that in Nigeria, widows are compelled to go through rituals to be pardoned for being involved in their husband's death, which can be life threatening and psychologically harmful. Sossou (2002) argues that in some parts of Nigeria, widows are subjected to ritual practices such as drinking the water used to bathe the corpse of their deceased husbands, sleeping alone or in the same bed, or being locked in a room with the corpse of the husband and also confined in the house to mourn their husbands.

Supremacy of fathers in families

One of the features of male dominance/patriarchy in Nigeria is the supremacy of fathers in the family setting. A father in a family set-up is the custodian of power and authority, who does not listen to the opinion of other family members. In this novel, Eugene is seen as the authoritative head of his family whose decisions are binding on all family members. He singlehandedly takes decision for all other members of the family. Jibin Monish and Kannadhasan (2021) note that women are excluded from decision-making responsibilities in the family as a result of patriarchy. For example, in the novel, Eugene also known as Papa, makes decisions alone concerning his family. He decides at will, who to visit and where to visit even at the expense of the health and well-being of other members of his family. As a result, Eugene frowns at any member of his family who dares to flout his orders because he is a dictator as the head of the family. (Adichie, pg 22) relates an incident where Beatrice is not permitted to remain in the car even though she is feeling ill. Eugene decides to visit Frair Benedict with his family members without prior notification to his wife, Beatrice. He also decides if the children should visit Aunty Ifeoma and when they can do so. (Adichie, pg 77) shows that decision-making is exclusively for the fathers in a family setting in a patriarchal society. For example, when Beatrice requests cooking gas on behalf of Aunty Ifeoma, but Eugene does not want anyone to question his authority. He asks Beatrice if she had planned it with Aunty Ifeoma. Eugene's supremacy as the head of the family is exemplified by his apportioning blame to Beatrice for the misdeeds of her children and punishing her alongside her children (Adichie, pg 73). This tyrannical manner in which Eugene rules his family is typical of a patriarchal family, as he dictates to them how they should live every minute of their lives.

Male gender exclusion from household tasks

The household domain and family are miniature versions of the larger society, hence the exclusion of the male gender from certain household tasks is a form of gender segregation in the family setting. For Hook (2010), gender differences exist in the household division of labour, which means that certain roles and chores are exclusively reserved for the women whereas some other tasks are for the men. Gender roles are responsibilities, behaviours and functions that are generally considered suitable or applicable for a particular gender (Olanrewaju & Awogbayila, 2022). The exclusion of the male gender from certain household tasks is a form of gender segregation in the family setting.

Gender roles are responsibilities, behaviours and functions that are generally considered suitable or applicable for a particular gender. This distinction of gender roles within the home has been one of the means of gender oppression and inequality. In *Purple Hibiscus* (Adichie, pg 95), female children are always found in the kitchen helping their mothers while male children are either playing football or in the garden. Traditional roles for men and women in most cultures have relegated women to primarily working in the kitchen.

Economic dependence of women and desperation to remain married

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The husband/father of the house is seen as being responsible for the economic provision for the members of his family. According to Springer, male breadwinning is a central component of patriarchy (2010). This implies that when a man provides all the woman's needs, then he will be able to exercise full control over her. Male breadwinning makes a woman totally dependent on the man economically, which fosters male dominance. In Nigeria, economic dependence of women, which has led to their exploitation and oppression was intensified because of colonialism. This colonialism brought about economic dependency of women on men because women have been denied equal access to education, job training, employment, health care, ownership and political power (Anunobi, 2002).
Beatrice and Yewande Coker are not employed in the novel, and they rely solely on their husbands, Eugene and Ade Coker, respectively, for their needs and those of their children. This makes them desperate to remain in the marriage as they do not have any other means of livelihood. (Adichie, pg 27) narrates this dependency dilemma for women, emphasising the plight of Yewande Coker, when her husband was arrested. Similarly, Beatrice expresses her fear of what will happen if she leaves Eugene's house, hence, her desperation to remain in her marriage despite the violence she faces (Adichie, pg 174).
Beatrice is afraid of life outside marriage and the stigma associated with divorce, so she stays in her abusive marriage until she thinks of a way to resist male dominance and violence. In the novel, Aunty Ifeoma tries to help her out of her abusive marriage, but Beatrice refuses. Patriarchy is a crucial hindrance to gender equality, as it makes a father and husband, the sole proprietor of everything in a family setting having absolute control over his wife and children. Eugene is a symbol of patriarchy in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*.

Figure 1 illustrates the Atlas.ti network view of forms of male dominance/patriarchy as explained above.

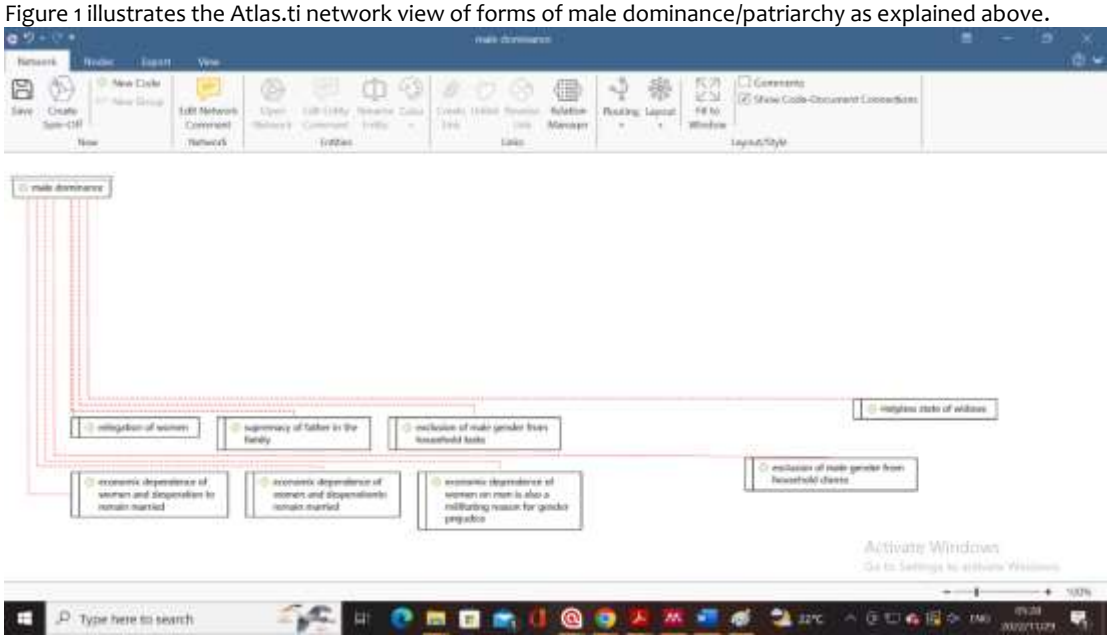

Figure 1 Network view of theme of male dominance/patriarchy

Figure 1 is the network view showing most of the sub-themes under male dominance/patriarchy as explained in Sections 1.5.1.1 to 1.5.1.5 The network view was achieved with ATLAS.ti after coding and grouping the codes. As shown in the network view, the helpless state of widows, economic dependence of women on men, desperation of women to remain married, supremacy of father in the family, exclusion of male gender from household tasks and relegation of women are indicators of male dominance and patriarchy as seen in the novel *Purple Hibiscus*.

Theme of violence/female suppression

Violence can be defined as an act against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which can lead to injury, death, psychological harm, deprivation or maldevelopment (Shukla, Srikanth and Shukla: 2022). Saha and Naz (2022) further affirm that violence can lead to both social and economic maldevelopment

of a country or continent. Similarly, Agosti (2023) claims that women experience violence from men on a daily basis. Violence against women and children, which can also be referred to as domestic violence, implies the type of violence that occurs in a domestic circle or family setting. Domestic violence constitutes a highly damaging dimension of the dehumanisation of its victims because of the consequence on the victim's wellbeing. For Astrick (2018), the subjugation of women has been the major factor responsible for violence against women by men.

Similarly, Alaggia and Vine (2022) have linked domestic violence to the exhibition of power and coercive control of men over women. This implies that patriarchy and domestic violence are often interrelated. In addition, Mbah (2022) argues that patriarchy and violence are both colonial legacies for African countries. Adichie, in the novel *Purple Hibiscus,* presents illustrations of physical and psychological violence as shown in the analysis (see Sections 1.5.2.1.1 and 1.5.2.2).

Physical violence

As discussed in Section 1.5.1, violence against women remains a common practice in Africa, either as means of maintaining male superiority, or of "correcting" the wrong doings of a female spouse. Igbo and Egbue (2005) argue that physical violence meted by husbands on wives can be traced to the payment of bride-price by the male spouses. It is believed that the payment of the bride price gives the husband full possession of the wife, hence the need for wife chastisement even in the form of battering. In *Purple Hibiscus*, Eugene exerts physical violence on his wife and children at will because he is the head of the family. As a result, Eugene feels he can treat his family anyhow because they belong to him. (Adichie, pg 24) narrates an example of Eugene's beating of pregnant Beatrice to the extent of her miscarrying a six-week-old pregnancy.

Similarly, the children are also trapped in domestic violent situations because their father, Eugene, tends to abuse them with his violent acts as he exerts his authority over his children and wife. (Adichie, pg 138) recounts the height of Eugene's violence with the pouring of hot water on the feet of his daughter, Kambili, because she was in the same house as her grandfather, Papa Nnukwu. These acts of violence perpetrated by Eugene on his children affect them mentally and physically, which cause them to live in fear in their father's house. (Adichie, pg 148) also narrates the experience of Kambili after being kicked and thoroughly beaten by her father, which resulted in her being admitted to hospital.

These abusive experiences Kambili and Jaja receive at the hands of their father are examples of violence meted against children. Beatrice tries to stop her husband by saying "Please, Biko" in a low voice, perhaps because of the fear of speaking loud before Eugene pounces on her. The manner at which Eugene deals with his children is not discipline, rather it is violence and child abuse (Mudany, Nduati, Mboori- Ngacha & Rutherford, 2013). However, the theme of physical violence is recounted from page 1 of the novel with Adichie relating an act of violence on Jaja by Eugene because he missed the receipt of Holy Communion (Adichie, pg 1).

However, violence against children is prevalent in Nigerian society (Ishola, 2016), which often devalues the children and leaves a lasting impression on them (Smiley, Moussa, Ndamobissi & Menkiti, 2021). The novel presents another example of physical violence where Eugene uses his belt to beat his children because they broke the communion fast (Adichie, pg 73). The belt is made of layers of brown leather with a sedate leather-covered buckle, and it lands on Jaja, Mama, and Kambili. (Adichie pg 37) also records the slapping of Kambili, "Papa slapped my left and right cheeks at the same time, so his huge palms left parallel marks on my face and ringing in my ears for days". According to Waterston and Janson (2020), serious maltreatment and battering is injurious and detrimental to children's health and development. However, Jaja and Kambili are used to beatings from Eugene as a corporal punishment for their misdeeds, right from their childhood. This is made clear by Chimamanda Adichie in her novel, *Purple Hibiscus* (Adichie, pg 137). On another occasion, Eugene cuts off one of the fingers of his son's because he missed questions at the catechism class. (Adichie pg 103)

Psychological violence

Psychological violence is a type of violence which is not as noticeable as other forms of violence. Hamberger and Larsen (2015) find that the victims of psychological violence are mostly women because of their greater vulnerability to these forms of violence compared to men because of the unequal power relationship between men and women. Those who are beaten and abused, either emotionally or physically, are also often depressed because of feelings of worthlessness. Beatrice, towards the end of the novel, starts to have feelings of depression as a result of the damage caused by the abuse of Eugene. (Adichie, pg 211) recounts the effect of the abuse on Beatrice.

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In addition, all the members of Eugene's family are psychologically traumatised because of the abuse and lifestyle to which Eugene has subjected them. On several occasions in the novel, Kambili will open her mouth to talk but words will not come out of her mouth. This is because Eugene's harsh punishments and beatings have restrained Kambili's tongue from holding a normal conversation with people. For Okuyade (2009:32), Kambili "struggles within herself to hold a normal conversation, a struggle which usually terminates in a statement, making her classmates observe her with familiarity laced with contempt". This is an example of Kambili's inability to hold normal conversations as she is tongue-tied. This makes her classmates in school call her a "backyard snob", while some people interpret her behaviour as pride because her father is wealthy. (Adichie, pg 36) recounts Kambili's struggle with speaking and the impact this has on her in school. As a result of Kambili being traumatised through her repeated abusive experiences, the words that come out of her mouth contradict what she intends to say. In addition, in many instances in the novel, Kamibili is shown to have no self-confidence at all. She cannot speak even to her father because of the way she has been brought up, and "mumbles" and starts to cough when she needs to reply to his questions. (Adichie, pg 69) relates this experience.

Kambili and Jaja live a regimented lifestyle that is characterised by a schedule from Eugene. Even when they travel to Nsukka, Eugene expects them to follow the schedule he has given them (Adichie, pg 78). This schedule debars the children from thinking independently and knowing how to manage their time themselves. Aunty Ifeoma disapproves of Kambili and Jaja's schedule in her house as narrated by (Adichie, pg 89). However, Jaja and Kambili's time in the house of Aunty Ifeoma becomes a turning point in their lives. Kambili's self-esteem is also developed, she feels at home, and free with her cousins and, subsequently, with her school mates. For the first time in her life, Kambili goes on an outing with Fr Amadi and enjoys it.

Aunty Ifeoma's house is a different context from their own home where their father restricts them from doing many things on their own and where they live in fear. Miraka (2022) opines that violence causes both fear and anger. Examples of this fear? are provided in the experiences of Kambili, Jaja and Beatrice because of Eugene's abuse. In addition, Amaka refers to Kambili and Jaja as "abnormal" human beings because of their timidness and low self-esteem. (Adichie, pg 101).

Beatrice is also abused psychologically in the novel and becomes mentally dejected because of Eugene's physical abuse. Adichie pg 14 records that Beatrice has sustained so many injuries because of Eugene's battering "but for the recent jagged scar on her forehead". She also suffered miscarriages on several occasions and was also a victim of oppression. Beatrice cannot voice her mind and dissatisfaction regarding her husband's violence. At a time, she laments that she is not sure if she is losing her mind already by saying that "'I do not know if my head is correct' she said, and pressed the back of her hand to her forehead, in the way that one checks the degree of a fever" (Adichie, pg 173). Beatrice is seen as losing her mind as a result of the psychological trauma she has experienced as a result of her husband's abuse (Adichie, pg 204). The mental effect of the psychological violence experienced by Beatrice is worsened as she decides not to talk to anybody again apart from gesticulating such as nodding (Adichie, pg 205).

Figure 2 illustrates the Atlas.ti network view of forms of violence as explained above.

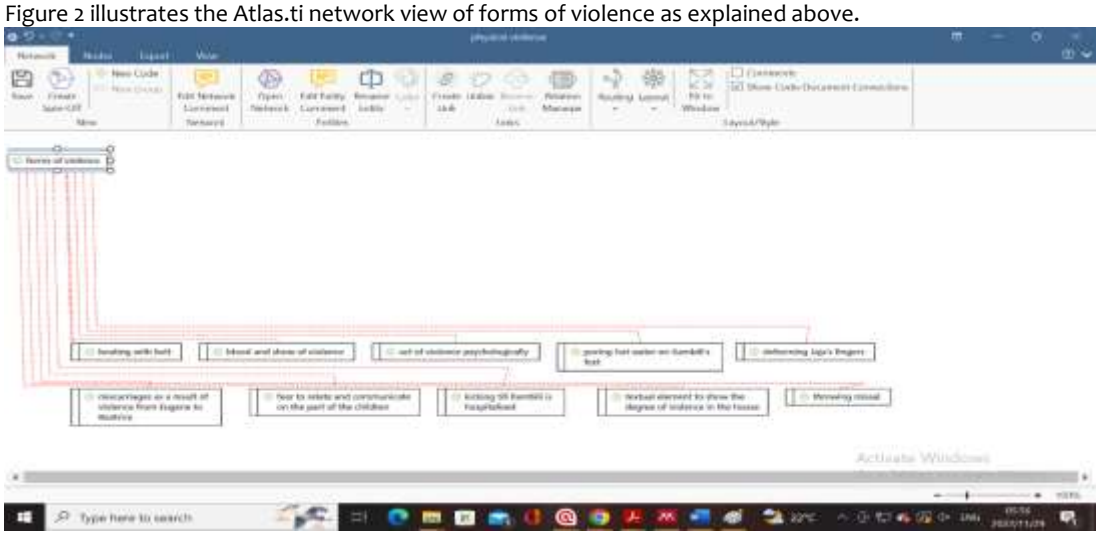

Figure2 Network view of the sub-themes under theme of violence

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The network view was achieved with ATLAS.ti after coding and grouping the codes. The network view showcases different forms of violence from Eugene inflicted on his children and wife such as beatings with his belt, kicking, pouring hot water on the feet of Kambili, deforming Jaja's F, Beatrice's miscarriages as a result of battering, fear on the part of Kambili and Jaja to relate and communicate with others as a result of psychological effect of violence on them.

Silence to resistance in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

Resistance can be regarded as one of the best tools for liberty from oppression and violence (Gandhi, 2012). In this novel, Beatrice adopts some strategies in conquering male dominance and violence as inflicted on her by her husband. She commences her journey of resistance in the novel with silence and as an individual without a voice. Eugene suppresses all his family members through incessant brutality, hostility and oppression. Even with all the abuse, the characters remain silent. Adichie depicts Beatrice as calm and peaceful at the start of the novel, but she becomes more revolutionary towards the end as a result of the violence and oppression to which she is consistently subjected. She does not have a life of her own and she lives in fear throughout her life with Eugene. Beatrice's revolutionary act as a means of resistance to violence is accelerated by Aunty Ifeoma when she is informed that Eugene beats Kambili into a coma when he finds out she has a painting of Papa Nnukwu. In response, Beatrice says, "'This cannot go on, *nwunye m*,' Aunty Ifeoma said. 'When a house is on fire, you run out before the roof collapses on your head'" (Adichie pg 150). Aunty Ifeoma's words open Beatrice's mind to the impending danger to her life and that of her children if they continue to endure Eugene's violence. This moment indicates the turning point for Beatrice in the novel for her liberation from tyrannical rule and unrest from Eugene.

Eugene's domination and dominance in the novel is contested towards the end of the novel by Beatrice's decision to poison her husband. Though she appears innocent, harmless, feeble and weak earlier in the novel, she develops and grows to be a fearless and brave woman by the end fueled by her husband's constant abuse and brutality towards her and their children. At this point, Beatrice's only means of resisting her husband's cruelty is by killing him through poison, and she tells her children boldly what she had done to kill their father. This act is performed by Sisi, who is Beatrice's maid servant, when she collaborates in poisoning Eugene's tea. This depicts the necessity for the cooperation of women in overcoming oppression, violence and male dominance. Beatrice and Kambili, thereafter, enjoy freedom, calmness and peace of mind after resisting their oppressor, and take over the family's business.

Theoretical interpretation of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

As Nigerian society is characterised by patriarchy and the marginalisation of women, the focus of post-colonial feminist theory is the liberation of women in colonised countries like Nigeria. Post-colonial feminist writings deal with the expression of desires and yearnings of black women and thereby giving voice to the voiceless (black women). Sprague, McMahan, Maqsood and George (2022) claim that women in Nigeria are faced with different challenges including oppression and subjugation. Even though *Purple Hibiscus* is set many years after Nigeria's independence and civil war, it reflects challenges and difficulties attributed to post-colonialism. For Yokossi and Koussouhon (2018), the legacies of colonialism characterise post-colonialism even in the area of feminism. This is exemplified in the life experiences of the Nigerian women depicted in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus.*

Eugene is an archetypal result of colonial influence and ideas, which shaped him to be a brutal and cruel man who oppresses his family members. Azuike (2015) argues that colonialism helped the male gender to have access to western education while the female gender remained domesticated by being restricted to reproduce, cook and take care of the family members. Eugene's acts of violence to his wife and children are evidences of oppression and subjugation, which post-colonial feminist theory fights against. In addition, freedom of women, especially black women, is one of the crucial aspects of post-colonial feminist theory (Nfah-Abbenyi, 2005). As a result, Adichie's novel, *Purple Hibiscus* is a call for women's consciousness and willingness to break all social and political structures that enhance gender inequality and violence.

From the socialist feminist theory perspective, economic independence of women will definitely aid the alleviation of gender inequality. The novel shows that the economic dependence of women on men enhances patriarchy and violence. For men, it is a weapon for them to oppress women and punish them by withholding economic benefits, if the need arises. For liberation from patriarchy, women need to be seen and be heard at workplaces and in economic spheres. In Adichie's novel, Aunty Ifeoma challenges the authority of Eugene because she is independent, educated and gainfully employed. As a result of the assets she possesses, she

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can hold her head up and challenge the unpalatable situations that society wants to subject her into as a result of the death of her husband. Adichie in this novel suggests that the economic independence of woman is needed to refute male dominance and violence in society. This is also in consonance with the aims and notions of socialist feminist theory.

Conclusion

This study attempted to increase awareness of the existence of male dominance and violence in Nigeria, which has implications for the continent. This was made possible through the study of male dominance and violence in Chimamanda Adichie's novel, *Purple Hibiscus,* using a FCDA approach. Women's resistance as seen in the novel is a sign of women's revolt against the male-dominated society. This novel shows how black female protagonists, such as Beatrice, are representative of black women who are victims of male dominance, violence, oppression and subjugation at the hands of their male counterparts, and how it is possible to metamorphosise from silence to resistance.

The motive of this article is to create social awareness and to build awareness of the need to resist male dominance and violence. The study desired to see Nigeria as a society that does not discriminate based on gender but rather builds a society that fully incorporates women without any form of discrimination. It is believed that this awareness needs a conscious and collective effort from both men and women. It entails changing and reshaping the attitudes of men to shun any form of dominance and discrimination since an accurate and proportionate representation of women in social systems has been shown to be important to the long-lasting success of the human race and existence (Reynolds, 1999). To achieve this, transformative change is important. For Amoussou and Dijmet (2020), this change is a social reality for which every woman longs, especially to be free from oppression and subjugation.

The objective of FCDA is the improvement of women from unfavourable gender contexts by addressing all cultural, political, economic, societal norms and traditions that are not beneficial to women. Once male dominance and violence are curtailed in Nigeria, the country should experience more development, and many children might not be homeless or motherless because of violence meted on their mothers. As a result, a more secure, equitable and successful society could emerge for all. To achieve this objective, women need to change their servile and accepting attitudes and be active in striving for, and achieving social change. Therefore, this study challenges the influences of patriarchy, and promotes women's rights in culture and religion, sexuality, male dominance, violence, female suppression, and governance thereby encouraging the United Nations General Assembly to reaffirm its Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Also, it should be made compulsory for all nations, especially Nigeria, to adopt CEDAW's cardinal objectives, and employ stricter sanctions for violating the convention.

It is proposed that the factors that contribute to gender and racial inequality in society should be tackled so as to eradicate the prevalence of gender-based violence. This can be achieved through education and limiting the effects of cultural factors and colonial legacies that contribute to gender inequality. To achieve this, gender education should be included in all school curricula in addition to frequent seminars, training, and workshops for both men and women on the benefits, advantages and necessity for gender equality. Gender awareness and enlightenment are essential for all ages and social classes to re-orientate the mindsets of men and women.

As a result, the governments of Nigeria should prioritise poverty alleviation and economic inequality, which are contributing factors to patriarchy in Nigeria and Africa. This could be achieved by offering financial aid and training to women to enable them to become financially independent. This financial aid and empowerment could be the introduction of a universal basic income or social welfare grants for women.

In addition, this study recommends that governments of Nigeria, and other African countries should adopt an intersectional basis when formulating policies and laws relating to gender equality so that immigrants, black people, refugees, and other categories of people can be captured in the legislations and policies to prevent all forms of inequalities in society.

Women should change their complacent attitudes and become more active in resisting inequality. This could be supported by encouraging more networks and alliances in society, government establishments, professional organisations, and churches to exert sufficient pressure to promote transformative change in society. By so doing, women who possess democratic and transformative agendas can be recommended for appointments so that political participation can enhance gender equality.

Furthermore, it is essential that gender mainstreaming, which is regarded as an approach aimed at alleviating issues relating to gender inequality, should be monitored, and evaluated regularly so that inadequacies can be identified and addressed.

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