

FACTORS INFLUENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG RURAL WOMEN IN CENTRAL VIETNAM

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Abstract

Objectives. This study examines key factors associated with domestic violence against women in rural areas of Central Vietnam. Specifically, it analyzes four groups of determinants: (i) husbands' perceptions and violent behaviors; (ii) wives' perceptions and resignation-oriented coping behaviors; (iii) social factors; and (iv) state management factors.

Materials and Methods. A questionnaire-based survey was conducted among women who had experienced domestic violence in rural areas of Thanh Hoa Province, Vietnam. The sample comprised 300 married women under the age of 50 who were permanent residents of the study area. Experiences of violence were classified by duration (lifetime and past 12 months) and by type (physical, emotional, sexual, and economic).

Results. The Chi-square test ($p < .001$) indicates a statistically significant overall model fit. The log-likelihood value (125.045) and the model's classification accuracy (85.5%) further confirm the adequacy of the regression model. The pseudo- R^2 value (33.1%) suggests that the independent variables explain approximately one-third of the variance in domestic violence among rural women in Central Vietnam. Overall, husbands' violent perceptions and behaviors, wives' resignation-oriented coping, social factors, and state management factors all emerge as significant determinants of domestic violence.

Conclusions. The findings provide empirical evidence of the multidimensional determinants of domestic violence against rural women in Central Vietnam. They underscore the importance of addressing individual perceptions, social norms, and institutional governance in the design of effective strategies to prevent and reduce domestic violence in rural contexts.

Keywords: domestic violence, impact, central region, rural women, Vietnam

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Introduction

Domestic violence against women constitutes a pervasive global social problem with profound physical, psychological, economic, and social consequences. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), nearly 30% of women worldwide have experienced at least one form of intimate partner violence during their lifetime. Beyond its direct impact on individual well-being, domestic violence undermines family stability, erodes social cohesion, and constrains long-

term socio-economic development. In Vietnam, evidence from the National Study on Violence against Women (2019), conducted by the General Statistics Office in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), indicates that 62.9% of ever-married women have experienced at least one form of domestic violence. Notably, more than 90% of victims did not seek assistance from formal institutions or authorities, highlighting substantial barriers related to access, reporting, and institutional trust (General Statistics Office of Viet Nam & UNFPA, 2020).

Existing scholarship consistently demonstrates that domestic violence is shaped by multiple, interrelated factors operating across individual, relational, community, and institutional levels. At the individual and household levels, factors such as educational attainment, income, alcohol consumption, and gender attitudes are strongly associated with the risk of intimate partner violence (Abramsky et al., 2011; Heise, 2011). At broader social and structural levels, entrenched gender norms, patriarchal ideologies, and inadequate legal and social protection mechanisms contribute to the normalization and persistence of violence against women (Jewkes et al., 2015). Empirical evidence from Eastern Europe further indicates that exposure to violence within the family during childhood significantly increases the likelihood of both victimization and perpetration of violence in adulthood, highlighting the intergenerational transmission of domestic violence (Rada, 2014).

In rural areas of Central Vietnam, women face heightened vulnerability to domestic violence due to economic hardship, frequent exposure to natural disasters, limited access to education and public services, and the persistence of traditional gender norms. Previous studies in Vietnam have identified low educational attainment, economic dependence, limited legal awareness, and social tolerance of violence as key determinants of domestic violence in this region (Nguyen Thi Van & Le Thi Thu, 2018; Tran Thi Hanh, 2020). However, much of the existing research remains predominantly descriptive and focuses primarily on individual-level characteristics, with limited empirical attention to the combined effects of household perceptions, socio-cultural norms, and state management mechanisms. As a result, the complex and interactive nature of domestic violence in rural contexts remains insufficiently explored.

To address this gap, the present study adopts a multidimensional analytical perspective to examine factors influencing domestic violence against rural women in Central Vietnam. Specifically, it investigates the interrelationships among husbands' perceptions and violent behaviors, wives' perceptions and resignation-oriented coping behaviors, social factors, and state management factors. By integrating these dimensions within a unified analytical framework, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of domestic violence and to generate empirical evidence to inform more effective prevention and intervention strategies in rural settings.

Conceptual clarification and definitions of domestic violence

Violence is commonly defined as the intentional use of physical force or power, whether threatened or actual, against oneself or others, that results in or is likely to result in physical injury, psychological harm, deprivation, or death (WHO, 2013). In contrast, abuse refers to a broader and more systematic pattern of behavior involving the misuse of power and control,

typically repeated over time, that undermines an individual's autonomy, dignity, and well-being. While violence may occur as isolated or episodic acts, abuse represents a sustained relational process rooted in unequal power relations.

Domestic violence, often referred to as intimate partner violence, encompasses any behavior within an intimate or family relationship that results in physical, psychological, sexual, social, or economic harm to a partner (WHO, 2013; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women [UN Women], 2020). Contemporary scholarship conceptualizes domestic violence as a multidimensional phenomenon that extends beyond acts of physical assault to include interconnected forms of abuse that collectively reproduce gender inequality and intensify individual harm. Because understandings of domestic violence vary across social and cultural contexts and are frequently reduced to physical injury alone, explicit conceptual clarification is essential to ensure analytical precision, methodological rigor, and interpretive consistency.

Following international standards (WHO, 2013; UNFPA, 2020), this study conceptualizes domestic violence as comprising five interrelated forms. Physical violence includes acts such as hitting, slapping, kicking, choking, or the use of objects or weapons to inflict bodily harm. Emotional or psychological abuse refers to behaviors that undermine self-worth or mental health, including humiliation, intimidation, threats, insults, coercive control, and social isolation. Although less visible than physical violence, psychological abuse is often persistent and profoundly harmful.

Sexual violence, including marital rape, refers to any sexual act performed without freely given consent, whether through force, coercion, or intimidation. International human rights frameworks recognize marital rape as a violation of bodily autonomy, irrespective of marital status. Economic abuse comprises behaviors that restrict access to financial resources, employment, education, or property, thereby fostering dependency and limiting women's ability to exit abusive relationships. Social abuse involves actions that isolate women from family, friends, and community life or undermine their social reputation. In rural settings, social abuse is particularly pervasive due to strong community norms and the fear of social stigma.

These forms of violence rarely occur in isolation; rather, they tend to overlap and mutually reinforce one another, constituting a cumulative pattern of control rather than discrete or isolated incidents. Accordingly, conceptualizing domestic violence as a multidimensional and relational phenomenon is essential for both accurate measurement and effective intervention.

To ensure conceptual clarity and methodological rigor, domestic violence was explicitly defined and explained to all participants prior to data collection. Interviewers received specialized training to deliver clear and culturally appropriate explanations, accompanied by concrete examples of physical, emotional, sexual, social, and economic abuse. Participants were informed that domestic violence encompasses both physical and non-physical forms of harm that affect autonomy, dignity, and well-being. This shared understanding helped ensure consistent interpretation of survey items across respondents, thereby strengthening the validity, reliability, and ethical robustness of the study's findings.

Material and methods

This study proposes the following hypotheses regarding factors influencing domestic violence against rural women in Central Vietnam:

H1: Husbands' perceptions and violent behaviors are significantly associated with domestic violence against women.

Domestic violence against women constitutes a pervasive global phenomenon, affecting approximately one-third of women over their lifetime (WHO, 2021). In many social systems, especially those with strong patriarchal structures, perceptions and practices of violence by husbands play a key role in maintaining gender inequality and violent behavior in the family (Jewkes, 2002; Heise, 2011). To understand the nature of this phenomenon, numerous international studies have employed the ecological framework, emphasizing the interaction between individual, relational, community, and broader societal factors (Heise, 1998).

At the individual and relational levels, perceptions of gender roles, power, and the legitimacy of violence strongly influence husbands' behavior. Men who believe they have control over their wives or who view violence as a "disciplining" tool are more likely to engage in violent behavior (Flood & Pease, 2009; Jewkes et al., 2015). Habits such as alcohol abuse, substance use, or being a victim or witness to violence as a child are also strong risk factors (Abramsky et al., 2011; Hindin et al., 2008).

At the social and cultural level, gender norms play a significant role. Many developing countries still have traditional views of male authority in the family, which "rationalize" violence as part of married life (Koenig et al., 2006). In local contexts such as Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, beliefs such as "the husband is the boss" or "household chores stay at home" have perpetuated victim silence and social tolerance of violence (UNFPA, 2020).

In Vietnam, the link between gender bias and husbands' violent behavior has been mentioned in many studies. Nguyen Thi Van & Le Thi Thu (2018) found that men who believe that "women need to obey their husbands" are significantly more likely to use violence. A study in the Central region by Tran Thi Hanh (2020) also found that frequent drinking habits and lack of emotional control are prevalent factors among husbands who commit violent acts.

The 2019 national report by the General Statistics Office and UNFPA showed that the proportion of husbands who had ever committed violence against their wives was closely related to alcohol consumption and personal beliefs about "the husband's rights in the family" (General Statistics Office of Viet Nam & UNFPA, 2020). Husbands who believed in the legitimacy of violence were less likely to feel guilty after the act and were more likely to repeat the violence.

Thus, the husbands' perceptions and habits are not only individual factors but also systemic, influenced by culture, society, and life experiences. In-depth research on this relationship in the specific context of Vietnam is necessary to propose appropriate intervention solutions, especially in rural environments where traditional values and gender stereotypes are still firmly held.

H2: Wives' resignation-oriented perceptions and coping behaviors are significantly associated with domestic violence.

In recent years, international research has begun to focus on the role of women as agents in some cases of violence, including confrontational violence, defensive violence, or proactive violence, especially in highly antagonistic relationships (Straus, 2006; Archer, 2000). Although women are often the primary victims of domestic violence, wives' perceptions and violent behavior, although to a lesser extent, can also contribute to the escalation of conflict in marital relationships (Capaldi & Owen, 2001).

Some researchers argue that domestic violence is not only an individual phenomenon but also influenced by relational, community, and institutional factors. In this context, the wife's perception of gender roles, of "the right to fight back" or "equality by fighting back," can be a trigger for violent behavior, especially when women experience long-term inhibition, persistent violence, or social injustice (Walker, 1989; Swan & Snow, 2002).

Some studies have shown that women who have a history of abuse, witnessed violence as children, or had their voices silenced in their marital relationships may develop a perception that violent resistance is the only way to regain power (Swan et al., 2008). Recent evidence demonstrates that childhood abuse contributes to the development of early maladaptive schemas, which in turn shape violent expression, tolerance of abuse, and dysfunctional coping strategies in later life (Rada et al., 2025). In addition, the habit of using abusive language, controlling behavior, jealousy, or even using force during arguments also appears in a particular proportion of women, especially in relationships with bidirectional violence (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010).

In the context of developing countries such as Vietnam, where traditional social structures still emphasize the role of the husband as the breadwinner and the wife as a submissive one, the occurrence of violence by women is often not taken seriously or is considered against the norm. However, in disadvantaged economic and educational situations, or when the wife is subjected to prolonged violence without support mechanisms, the act of resistance can go beyond the threshold of defense and become a habit of violent conflict (UN Women, 2017). In many cases, distorted perceptions of gender power, prolonged experiences of violence, or the belief that violence is the only way to resist have shaped defensive or antagonistic violent behavior in wives. In addition, the habit of responding violently can also be formed from social factors such as witnessing or experiencing violence in childhood, economic pressure, stress in dual roles (both working and taking care of the family), or inequality in the division of household chores (Pham Thi Thuy, 2019).

Central Vietnam is a region with harsh natural conditions, limited socio-economic development, and strong traditional cultural imprints, especially patriarchal ideology and Confucian etiquette. These factors contribute to the formation of women's psychological characteristics of resignation, sacrifice, and self-blame, a psychological mechanism that can lead to the maintenance of domestic violence in which they are victims (Nguyen Thi Thu Ha & Nguyen Van Binh, 2021). According to a report by UNFPA (2020), women in the Central region have a higher than average rate of domestic violence in Vietnam, especially mental and physical violence. However, most of them do not seek help or choose to remain silent due to fear of gossip, fear of shaming their families, and the belief that violence is "part of marriage." These characteristics are reinforced by traditional beliefs about gender roles, which often lead women to blame themselves when conflicts arise (Le Thi Hoa, 2018). Self-blame, guilt, and fear of social stigma create a

vicious cycle, causing women to continue to accept living in a violent environment without fully realizing its severity. Many studies in the Central region also show that women cannot often negotiate or negotiate power in marriage, leading to a state of "active resignation," meaning that they know they are being abused but do not choose to act against it or seek support (Tran Van Hoa, 2020).

In addition, factors such as lack of access to gender education, economic dependence on husbands, or isolation in closed community environments make it even more difficult for women to escape violent situations. In many cases, silence and patience are not only the result of fear but also a psychological adaptation strategy in an environment lacking social support (Ngo Thi Mai, 2017). From this perspective, it can be seen that women's psychology, including distorted perceptions, emotions, and beliefs about marriage and their role, plays a central role in maintaining or reproducing the cycle of domestic violence. Therefore, to effectively intervene in domestic violence in the Central region, Vietnam needs a strategy that not only targets the behavior of the perpetrator but also focuses on improving women's cognitive capacity, psychological autonomy, and negotiation ability, thereby breaking the mentality of resignation, which is considered an "invisible barrier" in preventing and combating domestic violence in this region.

In summary, while the majority of research still focuses on male violence, current analyses are increasingly broadening the perspective to include the role of women's perceptions and practices of violence. This is a necessary approach to understand the ambivalence of domestic violence better and to design appropriate, gender- and culturally sensitive interventions.

H3: Social factors are significantly associated with domestic violence against women.

Domestic violence against women is a global problem that is closely linked to systemic social factors, including cultural norms, gender power structures, socio-economic development levels, and legal systems. In the ecological framework, macro-level social factors such as cultural beliefs, government policies, gender power inequality, and traditional gender roles underlie violence against women in the home. Studies in many regions show that in patriarchal societies such as South Asia, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America, violence against women is legitimized by cultural beliefs that men have control over their wives (Jewkes et al., 2002; Koenig et al., 2003). In India and Bangladesh, women who experience violence often do not seek help due to fear of being condemned by the community, being seen as "unfaithful," or "violating family duties" (Naved & Persson, 2005).

In sub-Saharan Africa, especially in rural communities, gender stereotypes such as "men have the right to discipline their wives" or "women must be patient to maintain family harmony" are social factors that make violence common and considered normal (Uthman et al., 2009). Meanwhile, in Latin America, research by Bott et al. (2012) shows that domestic violence increases in poor urban contexts where social inequality is high, unemployment is high, and legal aid systems are weak. Weaknesses in the justice system and victim support services are also social factors that exacerbate violence. WHO (2013) stated that in many developing countries, the lack of investment in gender education, legal protection, and social protection has created a vulnerable environment for women, especially those who are poor, less educated, and living in remote areas. In addition, rapid globalization and urbanization have also transformed social structures, leading to conflicting gender roles in the modern family, an emerging factor contributing to the increased risk of gender conflict and domestic violence in many developing countries (Ellsberg et al., 2015).

Rapid social changes but lack of adjustment in terms of gender education and psychological and legal support have created a gap between traditional roles and new expectations for women.

In Vietnam, domestic violence against women is a serious and widespread social problem, deeply rooted in social factors such as patriarchal ideology, gender stereotypes, economic inequality, and ineffective protection mechanisms. According to the 2020 national report of the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs in collaboration with UNFPA, up to 62.9% of women have experienced at least one form of violence in their marriage (UNFPA, 2020). These figures reflect the prevalence as well as the silence of victims, which is a consequence of long-standing cultural norms.

Vietnam is deeply influenced by Confucian ideology, in which women are expected to "follow the three obediences and four virtues," placing the responsibility of maintaining the family on their shoulders (Nguyen Thi Hong, 2020). This traditional concept causes many women to endure violence in silence for fear of losing their honor, affecting their children, or being judged by the community. In many rural and mountainous areas, the concept of "it is normal for the husband to teach his wife" still exists, contributing to legitimizing violence (Tran Thi Mai & Le Quoc Phong, 2018). In addition, social factors such as educational disparities, the gap between rich and poor, and male unemployment are also factors that increase the risk of violence. Men in low-income or unemployed groups often feel powerless and are more likely to use violence as a way to demonstrate power in the family (Pham Thi Thuy, 2019). Meanwhile, the justice system and victim support, such as hotlines, shelters, and psychological services, are still limited, especially in the Central region of Vietnam, making women less likely to seek help (UN Women, 2019).

The Central region of Vietnam is also prone to natural disasters, difficult living conditions, and high poverty rates. These factors put pressure on family life and increase the risk of internal conflict, especially when men are unemployed or have a psychological crisis. Women in the family not only shoulder the care but also have the responsibility to earn a living. At the same time, the decision-making power on important issues is still held by men, creating a severe power imbalance (Pham Thi Thuy, 2019). Furthermore, the social support system in the Central region, from psychological and legal counseling services to shelters, is limited, especially in coastal and mountainous provinces. Women who experience violence often do not dare to speak up due to fear of being stigmatized, losing face with their families and communities, or being blamed for causing conflicts (UNFPA, 2020).

In the cultural and social context, social factors play a key role in maintaining and reproducing domestic violence against women. Changing community mindsets, promoting gender equality, and enhancing legal and social support systems are crucial long-term solutions to address this situation. Understanding the socio-cultural characteristics of each geographical area is a prerequisite for designing effective interventions to address this situation.

H4: State management factors are significantly associated with domestic violence against women.

Globally, governance plays a key role in preventing and responding to domestic violence against women. However, many countries in the developing world still have significant gaps in their laws, policies, and enforcement mechanisms, which contribute to perpetuating or exacerbating gender-based violence (UN Women, 2020). One of the important factors is the lack of uniformity in the legal system, especially in countries with conservative cultural backgrounds or affected by persistent patriarchal systems. For example, in many South Asian and African

countries, criminal laws do not clearly define forms of domestic violence or do not impose strong enough sanctions, leading to impunity for perpetrators (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2015). In some countries, laws only recognize physical violence, while psychological, economic, or sexual violence is often ignored, reflecting inadequacies in national policy awareness and priorities.

In addition, in many places, law enforcement agencies and public officials lack the knowledge and skills to handle domestic violence cases professionally. They are influenced by cultural prejudices or a tendency to prioritize family structures over the rights of victims (Jewkes et al., 2015). In some countries such as Honduras, Pakistan, or Nigeria, women report that when they approach the police or local authorities, they are often asked to "reconcile with their husbands" instead of receiving legal assistance or emergency protection (Human Rights Watch, 2015). In addition to the legal system, budget allocations and political commitment are also factors that reflect the effectiveness of state management. Many countries do not prioritize resources for programs to support women who have experienced violence, such as counseling centers, safe shelters, or free legal services (OECD, 2021). Meanwhile, systemic discrimination, especially in contexts of conflict, poverty, and social instability, increases women's vulnerability and prevents them from accessing justice.

Regional differences also affect regulatory effectiveness. In Southeast Asia, where traditional family values are highly valued, many countries, including Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines, still struggle to strike a balance between protecting women and maintaining "family stability" (True, 2012). Despite policy advances, the gap between legislation and actual implementation remains large.

In Vietnam, domestic violence against women is a serious social problem closely linked to cultural, economic, and institutional management factors. Although the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control 2022 and related policies have been issued, state management still has many shortcomings in implementation, supervision, and support for victims (Nguyen Thi Kim Anh, 2020). The traditional cultural context, characterized by patriarchal family structures, profoundly shapes societal perceptions of women's roles. In many cases, women who experience violence do not dare to speak up for fear of affecting the family's honor, being stigmatized by society, or not being fully supported by local authorities (Hoang Thi Lan, 2019). This reflects the ineffectiveness of the grassroots management apparatus in detecting, intervening, and promptly handling acts of gender-based violence. In addition, the lack of linkages between sectors from the police, health, and justice to women's protection organizations has led to gaps in the victim support chain. Many localities, particularly in rural and mountainous areas, lack specialized counseling centers, shelters, or hotlines, thereby reducing women's access to essential services (Ngo Thi Thanh Huyen & Le Van Hong, 2021).

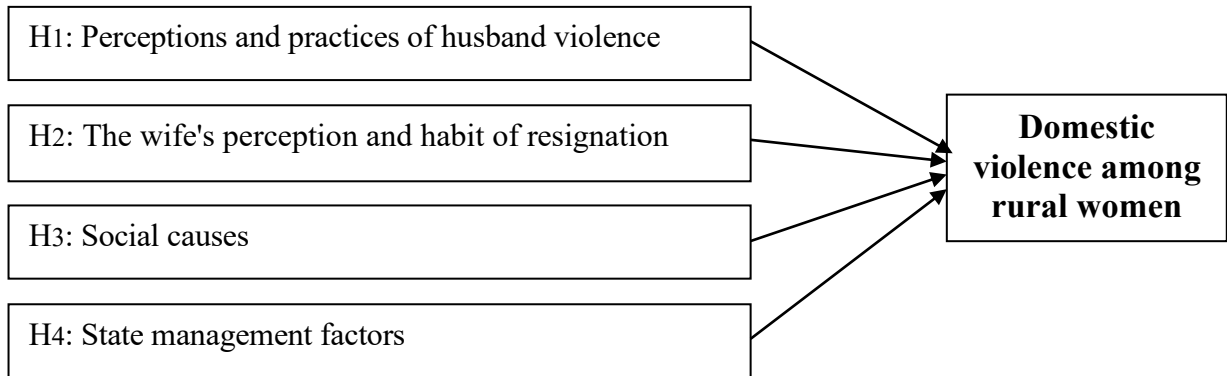
State management is also influenced by geographical factors, as evidenced by the fact that in the Central region of Vietnam, which is often affected by natural disasters and lacks development resources, local authorities must prioritize economic goals. At the same time, gender equality and domestic violence prevention are often overlooked (Tran Thi Huong, 2020). In addition, training for law enforcement officers is limited; many officers lack an understanding of gender law and tend to encourage "reconciliation" instead of handling violent acts according to the law. In short, the state management factor in Vietnam, from policy and resources to implementation, has a significant influence on the effectiveness of preventing and combating domestic violence against women. Improving institutional capacity and changing awareness in the

public authority system is a necessary step to protect women's rights and build a safe and fair living environment.

This study developed the framework shown in Figure 1 based on a review of the literature.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of the Study



Source: Developed by the author based on a literature review.

Research Design

Sampling method

This study employed a stratified random sampling method to ensure the representativeness of rural women in the Central region of Vietnam, a region characterized by diverse geographical, socio-economic, and cultural features. Specifically, the representative province chosen was Thanh Hoa. This province is located in the Central region of Vietnam and is characterized by its frequent exposure to natural disasters and its preservation of many traditional cultural values (Nguyen & Le, 2021). Within the province, two rural districts were selected using purposive random sampling. From each district, a list of women aged 18 to 60 years, stratified by duration (lifetime and past 12 months) and nature (physical, emotional, sexual, and economic) of violence, was compiled with the support of commune authorities and local women's associations.

The survey sample included 300 women, with 150 from each district. Inclusion criteria included: (1) residing in the locality for at least 5 years; (2) being able to answer the questionnaire independently; and (3) agreeing to participate in the study voluntarily. This approach also took into account the influence of the unique regional context in the Central region, where natural conditions are harsh, infrastructure development is low, and traditional cultural concepts still dominate strongly, to ensure that the research results accurately reflect the reality and characteristics of domestic violence in the region (Heise, 1998; Pham & Tran, 2020).

Data collection method

To ensure conceptual clarity and methodological rigor, a standardized definition of domestic violence was explicitly explained to all participants prior to data collection. The

methodological approach of this study was informed by prior socio-medical research on domestic violence conducted during crisis contexts. In particular, the classification of violence types and the emphasis on victims' self-reported experiences were adapted from the framework employed by Alexandru et al. (2021), who examined the socio-medical situation of domestic violence victims in Romania during the COVID-19 pandemic. This alignment ensured conceptual consistency in measuring multidimensional forms of violence while allowing contextual adaptation to rural Central Vietnam (Alexandru et al., 2021). Interviewers were trained to provide clear and culturally appropriate explanations, accompanied by concrete examples covering physical, emotional, sexual, economic, and social abuse in accordance with international guidelines (WHO, 2013; UNFPA, 2020). Participants were informed that domestic violence includes both physical and non-physical forms of harm that affect personal autonomy, dignity, and well-being. This shared understanding ensured consistent interpretation of survey questions across respondents, thereby enhancing the validity, reliability, and ethical robustness of the study's findings.

Data were collected through a quantitative survey using a structured questionnaire, combined with guided in-depth interviews to fully explore qualitative factors influencing domestic violence in the unique cultural and social context of Central Vietnam. Data collection was conducted from August to October 2024 in two districts representing rural areas of Thanh Hoa Province (Nguyen & Pham, 2022).

The survey questionnaire was developed based on Heise's (1998) ecological theoretical framework, including groups of variables such as personal characteristics (age, education, occupation), family relationships (decision-making power, marital conflict), community factors (role of social organizations, community awareness), and institutional factors (level of access to support services, intervention policies). The questionnaire was pre-tested in a commune in the Trieu Son District to ensure clarity, cultural appropriateness, and practical applicability.

Quantitative data were collected by a team of interviewers who were extensively trained in sensitive interviewing skills and confidentiality, especially in situations involving gender-based violence. Interviews were conducted directly in respondents' households, in a private space, ensuring maximum safety and comfort. At the same time, several typical cases (n=30) were selected for in-depth interviews, helping to clarify cultural and social aspects associated with violent behavior, such as gender stereotypes or the acceptance of violence as part of marriage (UNFPA, 2020; Tran & Le, 2021).

Econometric model to identify factors affecting domestic violence against rural women

Regression analysis is the study of the dependence of one variable (dependent variable) on one or more other variables (explanatory variables). On this basis, the average value of the dependent variable can be predicted given the value of the explanatory variable. The regression model has the form:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n + \varepsilon$$

Where:

Y_i : dependent variable (domestic violence against rural women)

β_0 : constant/intercept coefficient.

X1 (Perception and habit of husbands' violence): variables of perception, ideology, habit, and behavior. Expected positive sign (+).

X2 (Wife's perception and habit of resignation): cognitive, ideological, habit, and behavioral variables. Expected positive sign (+).

X3 (Social causes): is a variable that reflects cultural norms, gender power structures, socio-economic development levels, and legal systems. Expected positive sign (+).

X4 (State management factors): variable representing the legal system, policies, and policy implementation mechanisms of the state. Expected negative sign (-).

ε : random error

Results and Discussions

Respondent Profile

A total of 300 valid questionnaires were collected from married women aged 18–60 in rural districts of Thanh Hoa Province, yielding a response rate of 100%. To ensure data completeness and minimize non-response bias, additional backup households were identified during sampling; however, all targeted respondents ultimately participated. Consequently, all subsequent analyses are based on 300 valid observations.

Assessing the reliability of variables

As shown in Table 1, all measurement scales demonstrate acceptable internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.60 and satisfactory corrected item–total correlations. These results indicate that the observed variables contribute meaningfully to the measurement of their respective constructs and are suitable for subsequent multivariate analysis.

Table 1

Results of Cronbach's Alpha Testing of Attributes

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
X1 (Perceptions and practices of husbands' violence)	9.79	7.524	.432	.655
X2 (The wife's perception and habit of resignation)	8.24	5.312	.317	.605
X3 (Social factors)	9.55	4.924	.459	.725
X4 (State management factor)	9.83	3.805	.375	.617

Source: Results of processing survey data

Factors affecting domestic violence against rural women

Prior to estimating the regression models, correlation analysis was conducted to examine relationships among independent variables and between independent and dependent variables. Variance inflation factor (VIF) values were all below 2, and tolerance values exceeded 0.50, indicating that multicollinearity was not a concern in the estimated models (see Table 2).

Table 2

Correlative Matrix Between Variables

Correlations		X1	X2	X3	X4	Domestic violence against rural women
X1	Pearson Correlation	1	-.179**	-.121	-.054	-.479**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005	.142	.352	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300
X2	Pearson Correlation	-.179**	1	.132*	.156**	.045
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005		.031	.001	.001
	N	300	300	300	300	300
X3	Pearson Correlation	-.121	.132*	1	.533**	.316**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.142	.031		.000	.001
	N	300	300	300	300	300
X4	Pearson Correlation	-.054	.156**	.533**	1	.189**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.352	.001	.000		.002
	N	300	300	300	300	300
Domestic violence against rural women	Pearson Correlation	-.479**	.045	.316**	.189**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.001	.002	
	N	300	300	300	300	300

Source: Results of processing survey data

Factors include X1: the husbands' awareness and violent behaviors, X2: the wife's awareness and habit of resignation, X3: social factors, and X4: state management factors. With the hypothesis that other factors change, the level of influence of each factor is explained as follows:

Table 3*Results for Binary Logistic Regression Model*

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
X1	1.536	.389	39.084	1	.000	4.65
X2	1.337	.317	1.530	1	.001	3.81
X3	1.264	.503	3.189	1	.000	3.54
X4	1.139	.419	3.634	1	.001	3.17
Constant	-.032	1.527	.001	1	.925	.935

(Statistical significance level: * $p < 0.1$ ** $p < 0.05$ *** $p < 0.01$)

N 300

Prob> Chi² 0.000

Loglikelihood 125.045

Pseudo-R² 33.1%

Source: Results of processing survey data

Based on the results in Table 3, the Chi-square test with a sig value of 0.000 (<0.05) indicates the overall fit of the model, suggesting that the factors in the model have an impact on the status of domestic violence against women living in rural areas in Central Vietnam. On the other hand, the binary logistic regression model demonstrates an adequate overall fit. The log-likelihood value (125.045) and the model's classification accuracy (85.5%) indicate that the estimated model performs well in distinguishing between cases with and without domestic violence. In addition, the pseudo-R² value (33.1%) suggests that the independent variables explain a substantial proportion of the variation in domestic violence among rural women in Central Vietnam. With this result, the logistic regression model is written as:

$$\text{Logit } Y = -0.032 + 1.536 \times X1 + 1.337 \times X2 + 1.264 \times X3 + 1.139 \times X4 + \varepsilon$$

The results of the above model analysis can be interpreted specifically as follows:

Husbands' perceptions and violent behaviors exert a statistically significant positive effect on domestic violence against rural women ($p < 0.01$), supporting Hypothesis 1. Holding other factors constant, higher levels of violent perceptions and behaviors among husbands are associated with an increased likelihood of domestic violence. This finding reflects the persistence of patriarchal norms that legitimize male authority and normalize violence as a means of asserting control within the household. Such norms, deeply embedded in traditional family structures, contribute to the reproduction of gender inequality and elevate women's vulnerability to abuse.

Wives' resignation-oriented perceptions and coping behaviors are also positively associated with domestic violence and are statistically significant at the 1% level, thereby supporting Hypothesis 2. Women who internalize self-blame, fear social stigma, or perceive violence as an inevitable component of marriage are less likely to seek external support or resist abuse. Such resignation-oriented coping strategies may inadvertently sustain violent relationships by reducing the likelihood of reporting and intervention. These findings are consistent with psychological research

indicating that prolonged exposure to violence can shape maladaptive cognitive schemas that normalize abuse and undermine perceived self-efficacy (Rada et al., 2025).

Social factors are significantly associated with higher odds of domestic violence (Exp(B)=3.54, $p < 0.01$), supporting Hypothesis 3. This result indicates that entrenched gender norms, unequal power relations, socio-economic constraints, and limited access to legal protection collectively contribute to an environment in which domestic violence is normalized and insufficiently challenged. In rural Central Vietnam, traditional gender ideologies continue to restrict women’s decision-making power, thereby increasing their vulnerability to violence in situations of marital conflict.

State management factors exhibit a statistically significant positive association with domestic violence, supporting Hypothesis 4. Specifically, higher levels of state management factors are associated with increased odds of domestic violence among rural women (Exp(B)=3.17, $p < 0.01$). This finding suggests that limitations in policy implementation and institutional coordination, particularly at the grassroots level, may undermine the effectiveness of legal frameworks. Strengthening institutional capacity and enforcement mechanisms is therefore essential to enhance the protective role of state management and reduce domestic violence.

Table 4

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.850
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	137.523
	Df	13
	Sig.	0.000

Source: Results of processing survey data

Exploratory factor analysis further confirms the robustness of the research model, with all factor loadings exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.50. The extracted factors correspond to four core dimensions: husbands’ violent perceptions and behaviors, wives’ resignation-oriented perceptions, social determinants, and state management factors. Together, these dimensions provide a comprehensive explanation of domestic violence against women in rural areas of Central Vietnam.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that domestic violence against rural women in Central Vietnam is shaped by multiple interrelated factors, including husbands’ violent perceptions and behaviors, wives’ resignation-oriented coping, social determinants, and state management factors. All four groups of variables are positively associated with domestic violence, highlighting the complex and mutually reinforcing nature of individual, relational, and structural influences.

The findings suggest that domestic violence is not only driven by individual attitudes and behaviors but is also embedded in broader socio-cultural norms and institutional contexts. In particular, the positive association between state management factors and domestic violence indicates that the existence of legal frameworks and policies alone is insufficient. Limitations in policy implementation, weak institutional coordination, and gaps at the grassroots level may reduce the effectiveness of interventions and contribute to the persistence of domestic violence.

In rural Central Vietnam, structural constraints such as economic hardship, limited access to education and support services, and entrenched patriarchal norms further exacerbate women's vulnerability. These results underscore the need for comprehensive and integrated interventions that simultaneously address individual perceptions, social norms, and institutional effectiveness (WHO, 2013). Strengthening community-based gender education, enhancing women's economic empowerment, and improving the enforcement and coordination of policy measures are essential to reducing domestic violence and promoting gender equality in rural contexts.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen education on gender equality and women's rights from the grassroots level

Domestic violence often arises from distorted perceptions of gender roles within the family. In rural areas of the Central region, where patriarchal ideology and male chauvinism remain prevalent, educating communities—particularly men—about women's rights and the consequences of domestic violence is essential. Transforming community awareness constitutes a long-term and sustainable foundation for the prevention of gender-based violence. Community-based activities and direct engagement through mass organizations, such as the Women's Union and the Youth Union, are likely to generate more substantial and lasting impacts than passive forms of propaganda.

2. Economic empowerment of rural women

Economic dependence significantly constrains women's capacity to exit violent relationships. Enhancing women's economic autonomy can strengthen their bargaining power within households and increase their access to alternative livelihood options. In the Vietnamese context, microcredit programs and vocational training initiatives implemented through mass organizations have shown potential; however, their effectiveness may be enhanced through stronger market linkages and complementary skills development.

3. Develop a comprehensive support system for victims

In many rural areas of Central Vietnam, women who experience domestic violence face limited access to counseling, shelter, and legal assistance. The absence of integrated support systems constitutes a substantial barrier to timely intervention. Developing interdisciplinary support mechanisms that link health, legal, psychological, and social services may therefore enhance the effectiveness of responses to domestic violence at the local level.

4. Improve laws and policy enforcement effectiveness

Although Vietnam has enacted the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control, implementation challenges persist, particularly at the grassroots level, where incidents of violence are often treated as private family matters. Strengthening enforcement mechanisms, clarifying institutional responsibilities, and enhancing accountability among local authorities may improve the law's deterrent effect and increase victims' confidence in formal protection systems.

5. Encourage men to participate in violence prevention

Engaging men in domestic violence prevention initiatives represents a critical yet often underutilized strategy. Public communication campaigns and educational programs that emphasize positive models of masculinity and shared responsibility within families may contribute to reducing gender-based violence. Integrating gender equality education into school curricula could further promote attitudinal change among younger generations.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Ethics Committee Approval

The research was approved by the Department of Science and Technology of Thanh Hoa Province, Vietnam (Decision No. 546/QĐ-SKHHCN, dated 17 December 2020).

Consent to participate

Informed written consent was obtained from each participant at the time of recruitment. The subjects were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any stage, and they were assured of confidentiality.

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