

Lived experiences of domestic violence among Minangkabau women: A phenomenological study

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Abstract

Background: Very few studies try to explore women's experiences with violence in the Minangkabau cultural sphere. Thus, a phenomenological inquiry is timely to illuminate how Minangkabau women themselves experience, interpret, and respond to violence within these evolving cultural dynamics.

Purpose: This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of women who have faced domestic violence, focusing on the causes of the violence, its impact on their health, and the decision-making processes they undertook in response.

Methods: This study used a phenomenological study approach. The inclusion criteria were women from the Minangkabau tribe, aged 18-40, married or previously married, and with children. Participant recruitment was conducted through the Pusat Pelayanan Terpadu Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Anak/ Integrated Service Center for the Empowerment of Women and Children) and the Women's Crisis Center (WCC) "Nurani Perempuan", based on predetermined inclusion criteria. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was reached. Nine women were involved. In-depth interviews and field notes were transcribed verbatim, and theme analysis was performed using the seven-step Colaizzi technique.

Results: Four themes emerged from the data: (1) failure to resolve family conflict; (2) physical and psychological despair; (3) inability to make decisions; (4) need for external support. Participants' experiences reflect the erosion of traditional protective systems due to cultural shifts, economic dependence, and societal pressures.

Conclusions: The study highlights that unresolved family conflict, poor health outcomes, and limited decision-making power shape women's vulnerability to domestic violence. Strengthening community-based support and culturally sensitive interventions is recommended to empower women and reduce the risk of domestic violence.

Keywords: cultural norms; domestic violence; gender-based violence; phenomenology

Introduction

Domestic violence remains a global health issue among women worldwide, including Indonesia (WHO, 2020). The World Health Organization reported that approximately 35% of women worldwide and in more than 80 nations had experienced violence by their partners, including physical, psychological, sexual, or a combination of all types of violence. Moreover, 30% homicide of women in the world is caused by partner violence (WHO, 2018). It is a severe problem threatening women's health, well-being, and quality of life.

These statistics from around the world are in line with the situation in Indonesia, where rates of domestic violence are still rising dramatically, indicating that the problem is not only widespread but also ingrained in local culture. In 2018, the prevalence of violence against women 41% of physical violence, 31% of sexual violence, and 15% of economic and psychological violence are reported in Indonesia. Currently, the prevalence of domestic

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violence by partners in Indonesia in 2024 shows that activity restrictions and financial restrictions are the two most common forms of violence, at 30.3% and 15%, respectively; followed by emotional violence at 11.3% and a combination of physical and sexual violence at 10.4% (BPS & UNFPA, 2024).

Several factors contribute to women's violence, namely, destructive husband behaviors like alcohol consumption (Crane et al., 2019; Cunradi et al., 2018), lack of self-control (Omar Elsaltani & Foster, 2025), the social culture that makes a woman lower than men (Patriarchy culture) (Ruiz-Perez et al., 2017), and the men superior paradigm (Clark et al., 2018). Besides that, low education levels of women and few job opportunities increase the risk of women experiencing violence (Zhao et al., 2025)

The Minangkabau are the only ethnic group in Indonesia that adheres to a matrilineal system, a tradition in which women inherit family property, pass on lineage to their children (Revita et al., 2019), and are culturally respected as central figures in the household Kusniarti (2018). According to Hafizah (2019) Minangkabau women, they are safeguarded by their maternal uncles, or "mamak", and even marriage proposals need their consent. Despite these cultural ideals, recent years have seen a rise in violence against Minangkabau women, exposing a sharp contrast between tradition and reality (Ike, 2019).

Modernization, meanwhile, has brought significant consequences, altering cultural practices, including those of the Minangkabau. Previously, married Minangkabau women remained in their family homes, and husbands were considered outsiders to their wives' families, allowing wives to stay close to their parents and 'mamak'. This situation could act as a control and a barrier for husbands to prevent them from being abusive within the family (Nofardi, 2018). Another phenomenon is that some Minangkabau women are now choosing to marry men outside the Minangkabau ethnic group and to live separately from their parents and extended family by migrating to other areas, as a form of domestic independence (Pangulu et al., 2022). These choices mean that Minangkabau women no longer receive direct protection from 'mamak' due to their distant domiciles, highlighting the significant and concerning impact of modernization on the protective function of 'mamak' and the gravity of the cultural shift (Widihastuti et al., 2019).

On the other hand, in accordance with Minangkabau custom, women inherit their family's wealth, which should grant them a strong economic standing. However, in reality, this does not always translate into complete financial independence (Andra et al., 2025). The economic landscape for Minangkabau women is significantly shaped by two dominant forces: cultural customs and religious norms. These norms, which still uphold the husband as the family's primary breadwinner, play a crucial role in shaping Minangkabau women's economic independence (Valentina & Safitri, 2022). This

tension between cultural ideals and modern realities is reflected in the lived conditions of Minangkabau women.

The results of a preliminary study in a coastal village in Padang City, West Sumatra, found that women who experience violence, are neglected by their husbands, tend to lose their grip on life, become a disgrace and a burden to large families, do not have regular income and live below the poverty line (Hafizah, 2019) They also do not take good care of themselves and tend to be passive about their health conditions; physically, they appear older than their age. The condition of these women has an impact on the poor fulfillment of the basic needs of their children; where children grow and develop with incomplete families, lose their father figure, are malnourished, and do not get a proper formal education, even as some of them drop out of school and do menial jobs that they should not experience (Fatmariza & Febriani, 2019).

To interpret these complex experiences of Minangkabau women, it is essential to draw upon theoretical perspectives that capture both overlapping vulnerabilities and shifting cultural contexts. It is necessary to consider both the various intersecting identities that influence vulnerability using intersectionality theory, a concept that recognizes that people's experiences of disadvantage are shaped by multiple factors such as gender, race, class, and sexuality, and the cultural shifts that modify social norms and support systems (cultural erosion) to comprehend women's experiences of domestic abuse. As previously explained, the cultural shifts may have influenced the roles and positions of Minangkabau women within their families.

Very few studies try to explore women's experiences with violence in the Minangkabau cultural sphere. Thus, a phenomenological inquiry is timely to illuminate how Minangkabau women themselves experience, interpret, and respond to violence within these evolving cultural dynamics. Research on women's experiences of violence is essential to reduce its prevalence and mitigate the associated health consequences. A deeper understanding of these lived experiences can serve as the foundation for developing nursing care interventions that are more targeted, efficient, and effective for women affected by violence.

Objectives

The study aimed to explore the lived experiences of women who have faced domestic violence, with a focus on how personal identity and shifting cultural norms affect vulnerability, health consequences, and decision-making about their experiences of violence. It particularly examines how women contribute to the family economy and how Minangkabau cultural traditions are employed and have evolved. These elements have the potential to alter power dynamics in marriages and influence support-seeking behaviors, providing valuable insights for

understanding and addressing domestic violence.

Materials and Methods

Study Design

This study used a phenomenological approach to explore Minangkabau women's experiences in domestic violence perpetrated by their husbands, whether those who experienced verbal violence, physical violence, or sexual violence, or a combination of all types of violence.

Participants and setting

This study was conducted in Padang City, West Sumatra, Indonesia, and involved Minangkabau women who had experienced domestic violence. Participants were recruited purposively from two protection agencies: the P2TP2A (*Pusat Pelayanan Terpadu Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Anak/Integrated Service Center for the Empowerment of Women and Children*) and the Women's Crisis Center (WCC) "*Nurani Perempuan*", both located in Padang City. These organizations provide essential services such as counseling, legal support, and temporary shelter to women survivors of domestic violence, making them appropriate and ethical recruitment sites for accessing participants with relevant lived experiences.

Staff at these institutions identified potential participants and contacted them. The inclusion criteria were: (1) women of Minangkabau ethnicity from Minangkabau indigenous tribes, (2) aged between 18 and 40 years, (3) currently married or previously married, (4) having at least one child, and (5) having experienced domestic violence.

Initial contact was made via telephone to provide an overview of the study, including its purpose, ethical considerations, and participants' rights (e.g., voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw at any time). For those who agreed to participate, an in-person meeting was arranged at a location they identified as safe and convenient. These meetings were coordinated by staff from the respective protection agencies. Informed consent was obtained before the interviews.

Participants were given the full right to pause or discontinue the interview at any point if they felt uncomfortable or unsafe due to the sensitive nature of the discussion.

A total of nine participants were included in this study. The sample size was not predetermined but guided by the principle of data saturation; interviews continued until no new themes or significant information emerged.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of M Djamil Hospital, West Sumatra (LB.02.02/5.7/299/2022). Pseudonyms were used to maintain secrecy and conduct interviews. To ensure consistency and empathy, interviewers were trained in trauma-informed

techniques. Referrals for counselling were available if needed, and participants were free to withdraw at any time.

Data Collection

After an agreement was made on the time and place for the interview, an in-depth interview was conducted with the participants using an interview guide developed by the researchers based on a literature review and reviewed by a panel of experts. This in-depth semi-structured interview guide consisted of open-ended questions with probes to explore the women's experiences. Some open-ended questions used were "*What are your family life experiences?*" Can you describe in more detail your experience of domestic violence? How did that experience affect your life? The interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The interview was audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder, and field notes were taken to document non-verbal responses. Recruitment was terminated when the data were saturated, meaning no new ideas or relevant insights emerged from the data being collected.

Data Analysis

After the interview session took place with each participant, the researchers constructed verbatim transcripts. Researchers analyzed verbatim transcripts and found keywords in each participant's statement. These keywords are then analyzed and grouped into several categories to ultimately shape the research theme. In general, data processing in research uses Colaizzi's approach. Colaizzi is particularly well-suited for capturing the richness of participants' lived experiences while providing a straightforward, step-by-step method for extracting themes, ensuring credibility and transparency (Morrow, 2015).

Trustworthiness

Meetings with the research team to review the interview guide, sampling, and analysis were part of the audit trail, which also included audio recordings of the interviews, transcriptions, and accuracy checks of the transcripts (Birt et al., 2016). To better understand the substance of each interview, the researchers reviewed the tapes and listened to them several times. Independent theme formation was carried out, and the researchers debated the theme or themes they couldn't agree on until they reached consensus. Discussions were held to settle any disagreements until an agreement was reached. Reflexivity was ensured through reflective journals and team discussions, allowing researchers to bracket their personal assumptions and minimize bias, thereby ensuring that the findings authentically represented participants' lived experiences (Berger, 2013).

Field notes were used to document participants' nonverbal cues and contextual details during the interviews. To verify the accuracy and resonance of emerging themes, co-checking between researchers

and participants strengthened the credibility and authenticity of the findings. Collectively, these procedures contributed to the study's overall trustworthiness.

Results

At the time of the interviews, the reported mean age of the women was 31.3 years; seven women were divorced or separated, and the number of children ranged from 1 to 4. The mean length of marriage was 7.6 years. The majority of the women reported having completed senior high school. Seven participants reported being unemployed.

This study identified four main themes: failure to resolve family conflict, physical and psychological despair, inability to make decisions, and a need for external support. It reflects the participants' experiences of domestic violence and its impact on their physical and psychological health and decision-making strategies.

Failure to resolve family conflicts

Through data analysis, it is known that family problems and conflicts were triggers for violence against women. We divided this theme into economic and non-economic conflicts.

Economic Conflicts: Financial difficulties, such as debt, business losses, or job instability, often lead to tension. As stated by the following participants:

"We're fine until he stops working. He is a car salesman whose incentives depend on the number of successful sales. We have even been crediting the house. However, he decided to stop because the sale was difficult, and he began searching for a new job. We have pursued debt. He started getting angry. Everything I did was wrong. He said I was just a burden; he said I was a useless wife. Once, he slapped me when I did not cook, because there were no ingredients to cook; while maybe he was hungry "... (P2)

"Our business is selling clothes, but in the last few years, it has not worked. I asked him to find a new job. He is angry, does not want to, and survives. Until we are finally stuck in debt. If you're going to be a useful wife, he told me to help him solve the problem, rather than just praying. Since then, he often yelled at me. Almost every day, he cried, even cursed me. (P7)

Non-Economic Conflicts: Issues like infidelity and communication breakdown also escalated violence. As stated by the following participants:

"I found him having a video call with a woman, who I know is a widow. I suspect this is what causes him never to touch me again. He has always brushed me aside if I tried to get closer. Once I slept beside him, he pulled away. He said, Do not pretend

to feel that our relationship is all right. It is better to separate "... (P4).

"He still gives me my sexual needs. I feel it probably means that he has improved; in fact, it is not. He said that he used his right and was lazy if I asked him why he did not touch me... it's excruciating for me "... (P6)

The conflicts that arise are prolonged because the husband and wife are unable to resolve them. Communication efforts could be better. Even husband-and-wife communication often centers on children. If it touches on economic problems, the wife's suspicion ends in anger, harsh words, and beatings. As expressed by the following participants:

"I tried to talk to my husband, suppressing the pain of his treatment. But, every time I ask, he sometimes answers casually, not at all. He mediated me and avoided; I was not considered at all "(P5)

"Every time I ask, he says" enough, "there's nothing we need to talk about, I'm already dizzy with all this, you just add to my mind getting heavier" ... (P8)

"When I asked, What is your relationship with that woman? " he answered, It's up to you with your perception; I will not respond. It was harrowing for me "... (P3).

These unresolved conflicts became the root of tension that often escalated into violence, laying the groundwork for women's emotional suffering and sense of despair.

Physical and Psychological Despair

In this study, it was found that Minangkabau women who experienced violence by their husbands suffered physical and psychological harm.

Psychological Impact: Women hid their suffering to preserve family honor, experiencing anxiety, fear, and shame. Some participant statements:

"Sometimes, he doesn't come home when we fight; it keeps happening when he's angry. Then the neighbors began to ask me, Why does my husband often not come home? I am confused and feel pressured to answer. I could not possibly tell the truth and embarrass my husband. I said he had work outside the city. "... (P3)

"I am afraid to tell what happened to my family because he is the husband I chose of my own accord. I was worried, my family blamed me back "... (P5)

"I often cry over my fate. Why did things turn out like this? What was my fault? I've tried to be a good wife according to her wishes; I even stopped working to comply with her will."

Physical Impact: Stress led to weight loss, fatigue, and general deterioration of health.

"I lost so much weight. I even felt that my face looked much older. I couldn't sleep, my heart hurt every time I thought about my husband's treatment, I wanted to scream, but I couldn't "... (P9)

This deep physical and psychological distress

weakened women's confidence and gradually diminished their capacity to make decisions about their lives and relationships.

Inability to make decisions

The study found that the participants were unable to make decisions. They endure for long periods in these violent conditions. Participants often felt trapped, unable to act due to economic dependence, cultural expectations, and concern for children.

Economic Dependence. As explained by the following participants:

"At the beginning of my marriage, I worked. Nevertheless, he asked me to stop. Because of obedience, I stopped working. I did not expect this to happen. I want to get out of my marriage, but I am confused. Where do I have the money to support myself and the children? ... (P4)

"I really can't do it anymore. But where will I go? There's no way I'm going to my parents; they're too hard on their economy. I need a lot of money for the kids. I'm willing to be hurt as long as the children can go to school and eat ... (P6)

Social Pressure. As disclosed as follows:

"I think I have to survive. I feel we have long lived together, even if later divorced, which man would want to be a husband to a widow like me? ... (P4)

"I want to go. But what about the kids? They still need a father figure. I cannot imagine they will lose the father figure. Although I know he is not a good father ... (P5)

"From the beginning, I reminded the family always to keep the family together. Because we are from a good family, as a wife, I was asked to serve my husband well, because if I am right, then my husband would be good. But that does not apply to me. But I do not dare to complain to the family. I'm afraid they're disappointed ... (P5).

Cultural Pressure. As disclosed as follows:

Also, Minangkabau women are obligated to maintain the family's proper name. Divorce is not viewed favorably in Minangkabau society. It tends to be regarded as a disgrace to women because women cannot maintain their marriages. Their hesitation to act was further reinforced by sociocultural expectations that discourage divorce, leaving women feeling trapped until external help became accessible.

"I was born and raised in the Minangkabau culture. None of my family's descendants ever divorced her husband, whatever the reason. I do not want to give bad things to our big family. Divorce of husband and wife still bad for us ... (P1)

Need For External Supports

Women who experience violence need external support. They often feel helpless and worry about getting out of the problems that bind them. A sound support system will help women become more vital

and motivated to save themselves from further violent dangers. The presence of legal, familial, or community support was often the turning point that enabled women to regain strength and consider safer options.

Legal Aid and Mediation. As disclosed as follows:

"I am looking for legal aid agencies in this area. I'm coming. I tell them everything. I was given advice, coaching, and mediation. I ended up divorcing well. ... (P2)

"Legal aid agencies contacted my extended family; they mediated between my family and me, because I could not afford to be alone. Families understand it, and they even apologize for not knowing my condition ... (P9)

Family and Peer Support. As disclosed as follows:

"When I was in a very bad state economically, I contacted my friend, and I told him about what I was going through. He raises funds to help me become a venture capitalist. I felt very fortunate at the time ... (P4).

These four themes illustrate a cycle of vulnerability that Minangkabau women face when experiencing domestic violence. Unresolved family conflicts (Theme 1) often escalate into psychological despair (Theme 2), which in turn weakens women's confidence and capacity to make independent decisions (Theme 3). This inability to act is further reinforced by cultural expectations that discourage divorce and emphasize women's responsibility for preserving family honor. As a result, many women remain trapped in violent relationships until external support (Theme 4) becomes accessible, enabling them to break the cycle and consider safer options.

Discussion

This study found that domestic violence against women is a combination of issues, including unresolved marital conflict, economic pressures, cultural expectations, and a lack of effective support systems for women.

Participants in this study shared their stories of how their initially tranquil marriages progressively deteriorated into conflict, neglect, and distance, as evidenced by a decline in communication between spouses. Couples reported spending little time together, discussing personal feelings infrequently, and having intimate moments only when necessary. Moreover, marital tensions escalated due to changes in the husband's behavior or suspicions of infidelity. When their wives tried to speak, some husbands even reacted angrily, cursing, or physically, kicking, slapping, or pulling their hair. These findings resonate with research showing that poor marital communication strongly predicts violence. Our study results align with research conducted in several other countries with diverse

cultures, including the Minangkabau. A survey on multicultural families found a robust negative relationship between functional communication and violence in multicultural couples (Clark et al., 2018; Krob & Steffen, 2015; Namy et al., 2017). It is said that husbands often exhibit a distracting communication style towards their wives, exert pressure, and display a sense of superiority.

This study also highlighted the role of cultural and institutional factors in contributing to their vulnerability, alongside interpersonal conflict. In Minangkabau society, women are expected to be quiet and patient, and to discuss family matters with their children or other relatives rarely. Women hid their pain to preserve family honor and their husbands' pride, demonstrating a strong sense of shame (Irawaty, 2019). This emotional suppression contributes directly to psychological despair, as women internalize their suffering and develop feelings of isolation, helplessness, and anxiety.

Minangkabau women should have been safeguarded by their maternal uncles, or "*mamak*" (Eva & Afri, 2023). However, different living locations do not provide "*mamak*" opportunities to fulfill their mediation roles to the fullest. Thus, women are increasingly powerless to face problems and resolve family conflicts. This lack of familial mediation reinforces the participants' inability to make decisions, as they lack both guidance and support from traditional protective structures.

The current study also found that economic problems trigger violence against women. Research in Kenya reveals a trend like that found in Minangkabau's study, indicating that violence is also triggered by financial problems (Chiang et al., 2018). Although matrilineal property rights under Minangkabau inheritance laws theoretically provide women with economic stability, many participants lacked autonomous access to or control over these assets (Hanani, 2013), especially if they are not the only daughter in the family (Fatmariza & Febriani, 2019; Hanani, 2013).

Thus, Minangkabau women depend entirely on their husbands' income, especially if they do not work, either because they did not have a job from the beginning of the marriage or because they stopped working at their husbands' request after marriage. For many women in Minangkabau, it is challenging for them to refuse a husband's request, so some reluctantly leave their jobs (Irawaty, 2019).

Similar to our study findings, some previous studies found that husbands started to abuse them when they had financial problems due to a backward business, reduced income, and job loss (Ozcan et al., 2016; Vyas et al., 2015). This will affect the tense relationship between husband and wife (Choi & Hyun, 2016). Ultimately, this sparks a conflict between spouses that can end in the presence of violence as a form of emotional overflow (Kisa et al., 2019). These economic pressures also exacerbate psychological despair, as women feel trapped and responsible for family survival.

Husbands often begin to think and claim that their wives are a burden, unable to provide any support. At the same time, their families continue to have urgent economic needs for clothing, food, shelter, and children's education. The stress experienced by husbands results in violence against wives as a form of outlet for their failure to function as the primary breadwinner (Kusniarti, 2018).

Mellar et al. (2024) reported that women who often experience domestic violence are economically dependent on their husbands and have low levels of education. Similarly, Mabena et al. (2025) also noted that the predictors of violence against women are those from low-income or unemployed households.

The weak position of Minangkabau women today is no different from that of women from other cultures and countries (Ozcan et al., 2016). They researched rural women in Turkey who have a patriarchal system, and found that women, socially and economically, are very dependent on their husbands, and even in the patriarchal culture, there are gender-based differences in treatment. Men can physically reprimand their wives as an excuse to discipline family members.

Minangkabau women who experience violence from their husbands have a significant psychological burden. Not infrequently, they have to face the questions their closest neighbors sometimes ask. The life of a husband and wife in Minangkabau is bound by unwritten rules that require them to live in the same house, sleep in the same room, and interact with neighbors. Husbands who rarely return home or return home late at night are taboo and considered negative things for the Minangkabau people. These social pressures heighten feelings of helplessness and isolation, reinforcing psychological despair.

The Minangkabau community's social life is quite open, allowing them to communicate with each other through interactions with neighbors. Questions will arise when a family or certain individuals "*break*" society's rules, even if it is an internal family issue. Any questions from others were inner pressure for women victims of violence by their husbands. They usually answer with a smile only or respond with other answers that do not raise suspicion among their neighbors about their husbands; women will hide their suffering as much as possible. Minangkabau women are always taught to maintain their husbands' good name because "husbands are clothes for them, and they are clothes for their husbands" (Irawaty, 2019). The meaning is that when the husband's disgrace spreads to the broader community, they also share their shame. This illustrates how cultural norms contribute to women's inability to make decisions and seek help independently.

This study also found that women who experience violence by their husbands try to reduce social interaction between themselves and their surroundings; they avoid talking about their husbands and their family activities. These women

will cry alone over their situation, holding back their emotional turmoil and sadness in front of their children. They even lied when the children asked, “*Why didn’t you come home, Mom?*”, “*Where did you sleep tonight, Mom?*” “*Why is Daddy mean to Mom? Why did he hit Mom?*” Usually, they choose not to tell their children the truth because they do not want them to hate their father. Such behaviors reflect both psychological despair and constrained decision-making.

The mental pressures experienced by women often make it difficult for them to sleep, feel inferior in the social environment, and avoid intense social interactions. The woman cannot feel happiness and is confused about how to face life, so she forces herself to stay healthy for her children’s sake.

In the Minangkabau culture, women are continually educated to be good wives. They possess minimal household skills, are patient, and love their husbands and children. They always prioritize the interests of their husbands and children and can perform daily domestic tasks, such as washing clothes and cooking meals for the family (Kusniarti, 2018). Women are taught that, regardless of their level of education or the quality of their work, they are still expected to be wives who serve their husbands, as the husband is the family leader. These cultural norms further contribute to both the inability to make decisions and dependence on external support.

Minangkabau women are taught the norm that, once married, they must obey their husbands’ words above all. Parents and other family members should not interfere in their household affairs unless specifically asked to do so. Minangkabau women have, over generations, indirectly absorbed their parents’ teachings, namely that any conflicts between husband and wife should not be disclosed to other family members, let alone the wider community.

In this study, the few participants who accessed legal aid or community support illustrate how external interventions can interrupt cycles of violence reinforced by cultural and economic constraints. Support systems provided both financial relief and legitimacy to challenge cultural stigma around divorce. The community and maternal health nurses can adopt a trauma-informed and empowerment-based approach, identifying early signs of abuse, offering confidential support, and connecting women with legal or community-based services.

Assistance is provided by several counselors in these private institutions, where, on average, the counselors are also people who have previously been victims of violence and have found ways to rise and build a better life. It can be concluded that counselors are “*former victims*,” and their quality of protection and assistance is not yet professional. They put forward their previous personal experiences. However, the investigation results show that they have also received training on protecting women victims of violence. This highlights the critical role of external support in

enabling women to regain decision-making power and overcome psychological despair.

With all the limitations of the existing system of protection for victims of violence, women victims of violence feel hope that they can get out of the complex problems of their lives. They feel that others understand their condition and are willing to help them. It encourages women to realize they are not alone in the face of conflict. These examples illustrate how external support can mitigate both economic vulnerability and psychological distress.

A sound system supports and breaks the chain of the suffering of women who experience domestic violence (Sparrow et al., 2023). When they have the right view and the people around who empathize and care, this woman usually dares to end the violence they experienced immediately. Women victims of violence also need to be supported to be economically independent, so they will no longer depend on others (Bergvall, 2024). Health assistance is an important thing that women need to be detached from the physical and mental disturbance due to the violence they experience. Therefore, the support system is essential in improving women’s lives with violence (Aktaş Özkaşacı & Eren, 2020; Jeremiah et al., 2018).

However, none of the women in this study sought help from healthcare facilities. It may indicate that women experiencing violence are unaware that nurses and other health professionals can provide support for them. Many perceive health services only as places for health care, not as safe spaces to discuss domestic problems. Others may doubt whether nurses can maintain confidentiality or provide psychosocial assistance.

As part of the national health service system in Indonesia, nurses need to develop various efforts to reduce violence against women, including developing appropriate interventions for assisting and recovering physical and psychological trauma experienced by women with violence. Multiple programs can be created and expanded to screen women at risk of experiencing violence and then break the cycle. Community and public health nurses can collaborate with women’s and child protection units, such as Women’s Crisis Centers and local organizations, to provide integrated health and psychosocial care, ensuring a continuum of support for survivors of violence.

Strengths and Limitations

This study gives unique insight into the lived experiences of women facing domestic violence in the Minangkabau cultural context. The phenomenological technique captures participants’ emotions and coping strategies. Using rigorous approaches, such as verbatim transcription and theme coding, increased the credibility of the results. The findings have practical implications for nursing practice, community support, and the development of culturally appropriate interventions.

However, this study also has several limitations.

First, the findings are based on victims' self-reported sensitive experiences, which may be impacted by memory or emotion, leading to some recall bias. In addition, each woman's story is essential in its own right; however, self-reported data can be influenced by how participants remember and choose to share their experiences. Second, men's viewpoints were not addressed, making it impossible to grasp how they perceive cultural changes within their relationships. Finally, because the participants came from a particular cultural and social context, the findings may not reflect experiences in other settings. Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insight into how women experience and make sense of cultural change in their intimate relationships.

Practical Implications

The findings underscore the need for nursing-led interventions that target the four primary areas identified in this study. By providing family counselling and health education that encourage constructive communication and nonviolent coping mechanisms, community health nurses can significantly improve family mediation and conflict resolution. To help women manage the emotional anguish, anxiety, and depression brought on by violence, psychiatric and mental health nurses play a critical role in providing trauma-informed counselling and mental health services. By including empowerment, education, and economic skill-building activities into standard maternal and reproductive health programs, maternal and women's health nurses can support women's autonomy. Finally, cooperation between nurses and legal and social support systems, such as protective services and Women's Crisis Centers, can ensure that survivors receive comprehensive, culturally sensitive, and home-based support, including family counselling and health education that promote constructive communication and nonviolent coping mechanisms.

Additionally, training husbands on polite domestic behavior and educating women about their rights might help lessen violence triggers by relating cultural norms to real-world situations. When combined, these strategies provide an evidence-based, culturally sensitive method of safeguarding Minangkabau women and enabling them to confront and overcome domestic abuse.

Future Research

Further inquiry should expand the sample to include women engaged with official support services and incorporate men's perspectives on domestic violence within Minangkabau society. Intervention studies testing the effectiveness of culturally and economically based empowerment programs are also warranted.

Conclusions

This study shows that cultural shifts in the

Minangkabau matrilineal system, such as women migrating after marriage, reduced inheritance-based economic control, and diminished oversight from "mamak", have weakened women's positions, making them more vulnerable to domestic violence. The findings highlight the need for strategies that empower women, provide external support, and strengthen culturally sensitive protective systems to reduce the risk of violence.

Declaration of Interest

All authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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Data Availability

The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are not publicly available due to the sensitive and confidential nature of the participants' experiences. However, they are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, provided permission is obtained from the institutional ethics committee.

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