

THESIS

MEN'S JUSTIFICATION OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN GHANA: AN  
ANALYSIS OF A LIFE COURSE APPROACH TO NEUTRALIZATION TECHNIQUES.

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## ABSTRACT

### MEN'S JUSTIFICATION OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN GHANA: AN ANALYSIS OF A LIFE COURSE APPROACH TO NEUTRALIZATION TECHNIQUES.

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) remains a significant societal and global issue with detrimental effects on individuals' well-being and health and society. This study aims to investigate the factors that lead to the justification of IPV by men in Ghana because it is a prevalent issue in Ghana. This study delves into the complex phenomenon of men's justification of IPV through the utilizing a life course approach to techniques of neutralization. Studies in Ghana focus on life course perspectives on IPV justification but lack deeper explanations for perpetrators' use of neutralization techniques. This study uses the 2014 and 2022 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) dataset. The relationship between justification of intimate partner violence (IPV) and background characteristics of men was examined using the ordinary least squares and the binary logistic regression.

Results shows the justification of wife beating: if wife refuses to have sex with husband (2014: 5.7% and 2022: 6.1%); if wife argues with husband (2014: 6.9% and 2022: 10.2%); if wife burns food (2014: 3.2% and 2022: 2.5%); if wife neglects the children (2014: 9.8% and 2022: 11.2%); if wife goes out without telling the husband (2014: 7.7% and 2022: 9.0%). The findings reveal that in both 2014 and 2022, age exhibits a curvilinear association with justifications of IPV. The results indicate a significant negative association in both years ( $\beta_{2014} = -0.035$ ;  $\beta_{2022} = -0.036$ ) between wealth and the justification index ( $p < .05$ ). Age, level of education, wealth, religion,

ethnicity, occupation, marital status, and number of children were all found to be significantly associated with men's justification of IPV against their intimate partners.

These findings provide valuable insights for policy implications and highlight the importance of addressing age-related factors in interventions aimed at preventing IPV, such as protecting the rights of the vulnerable against all forms of abuse, be it physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, socio-economic, or harmful cultural practices in Ghana. The encouragement of formal education in the 16 regions would help reduce the justification of IPV since it is evident that higher formal education reduces the approval of IPV.

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## DEDICATION

To Sara Amea and Joshua Amo-Adjei

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## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Globally, violence against women, including marital women and women in intimate relationships, is an international concern that affect people across age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and culture (Dienye and Gbeneol 2009; Kishor and Johnson 2006; Oyeridan and Isiugo-Abanihe 2005; Panda and Agarwal 2005) and Ghana is noy exempt from this problem. In Ghana, most domestic violence (DV) / intimate partner violence (IPV) was/is considered to be a private matter, and it was always and still sometimes addressed in the home. Since then, domestic violence (DV) has been recognized as a public health concern and has adverse effects on the physical and mental health of women (Abramsky et al. 2011; Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). Also, according to Tenkorang and Owusu (2018), domestic violence and family violence in Ghana has become endemic. Domestic violence (DV) is the occurrence or threat of violence towards an individual with whom the perpetrator has or had an intimate relationship (Colorado Revised Statutes Pertaining to Criminal Law 2013:18-6-800.3), Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) on the other hand is any form of abuse or violence that occur or happen between two people who have close personal relationship or intimate relationship it involves physical, emotional, social, economic mistreatment, psychological, and sexual violence (Dickson, Ameyaw, and Darteh 2020) and family violence encompasses acts or threats of physical, sexual, or psychological violence perpetrated by a family member against another family member (McCloskey and Eisler 2022; Howell, Napier, Thomsen, Martinez-Torteya, and Källström 2023). It includes child abuse and neglect, sibling abuse, parent/in-law abuse, elder abuse, and intimate partner violence (Soh, Grigg, Gurvich, Gavrilidis, and Kulkarni 2021).

In Ghana, intimate partner violence (IPV) is still on the rise, according to (Tenkorang and Owusu 2018; Owusu Adjah and Agbemafle 2016) asserted that long-term consequences of childhood abuse on victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence (IPV). According to data from the Institute of Development Studies and Ghana Statistical Services & Associates (2016), 28% of Ghanaian women and 20% of men are believed to have experienced physical, sexual, emotional, or financial abuse in intimate relationships. Mostly, the victims of domestic violence / intimate partner violence in Ghana are women (Tenkorang and Owusu 2018). This is due to several socio-cultural norms that target women, such as male dominance, gender inequality, and socioeconomic inequality (Tenkorang, Yeboah, Owusu, and Bannerman 2013; Amoakohene 2004; Ofei-Aboagye 1994).

Domestic violence is a complex phenomenon with inherent structural and systemic attributes. It is not random, as there are always underlying reasons, such as social and cultural factors as to why individuals engage in abusive behavior towards their partners (Sewell, Martin, and Abel 2010; Chaudhary 2013; Buryak 2023). IPV victims in Ghana, especially women, do not report domestic violence due to societal and cultural barriers because they believe they are not supposed to leave their relationship/marriage no matter what happens and worry about how society will look at them if they leave the relationship/marriage. Most studies in Ghana have contributed to addressing the justification of IPV in Ghana from a life course perspective (Doku and Asante 2015; Amo-Adjei and Tuoyire 2016; Tenkorang and Owusu 2018; Dickson et al. 2020) but there is lack of a deeper explanation of why the perpetrators justify their actions through neutralization techniques. Therefore, the present study seeks to contribute to the understanding of the perpetration of intimate partner violence (IPV) / domestic violence (DV) against Ghanaian women from the male's (offenders') perspective through a life course approach to techniques of neutralization.

The life course perspective is a theoretical framework that analyzes how the lives of individuals are influenced by a blend of biological, psychological, and social factors throughout their lifetime (Fraga, Amorim and Soares 2022). This viewpoint acknowledges that life is an ongoing progression and that multiple elements, such as age, gender, and social environment, collaborate to influence individuals' paths and results. It emphasizes the interdependence of various life phases and the combined effect of experiences throughout time. The life course perspective is highly advantageous for examining subjects such as inequality, nutrition, violence, intergenerational relationships, and family dynamics (Tenkorang and Owusu 2018). It enables a thorough comprehension of how these factors develop and interplay throughout individuals' lives. Sykes and Matza (1957) define the techniques of neutralization as justifications or rationalizations that delinquents use to neutralize or temporarily suspend their commitment to conventional values and attitudes. These techniques enable individuals to temporarily set aside societal norms and values, allowing them to engage in actions that would typically be seen as deviant or delinquent (Kaptein and van helvoort 2019). According to Sykes and Matza (1957) by employing these techniques, individuals can reduce feelings of guilt or shame associated with their actions, thus maintaining a positive self-image while deviating from societal expectations.

This study adopts a life course approach to studying neutralization techniques for explaining why men justify IPV perpetration in Ghana using the 2014 and 2022 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS). This study aims to: (1) improving our understanding of intimate partner violence among Ghanaian Women from the perpetrators (i.e., male's perspective); (2) help policy makers and grassroots organization draw a mitigating strategy to help prevent and reduce the occurrence of intimate partner violence perpetration among intimate partners in Ghana;

and (3) Allow us understand the justification of IPV perpetration from a life course perspective to neutralization techniques.

The objective of this study is to (1) Examine the effects of age on IPV justification in Ghana, (2) determine the effects of wealth on IPV justification in Ghana, (3) determine which variable has the most robust IPV justification of men in Ghana, and (4) Describe how IPV justification has changed between 2014 and 2022 in Ghana. The study will also help grassroots policymakers and grassroots organizations draw a mitigating strategy to help prevent and reduce the occurrence of domestic violence /intimate partner violence perpetration among intimate partners in Ghana. Lastly, the study will help us understand IPV/DV perpetration from the life course perspective and intersectionality lens using neutralization techniques.

### **Intimate Partner Violence /Domestic Violence: The Scope of the Problem.**

According to Kishor and Johnson (2004), the prevalence of domestic violence among women is estimated to exceed 50% on a global scale. Globally around 35% of women have encountered instances of physical and sexual intimate violence during their lifetime (WHO 2018). In the USA, the National Intimate Partner, and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) 2015 found that 43.6 million women have experienced IPV in their lifetime, with 30 million reporting some other form of IPV. In South-East Asia region, it is estimated that 33 percent of women had experience IPV (WHO 2018) whereas for the African region, it is estimated that 37 percent of occurrence of IPV is exhibited. The lifetime occurrence rate of physical and sexual intimate partner violence among women aged 15-49 who have been married or in a partnership is evaluated to be around 33 percent within the Sub-Saharan African region.

The high prevalence rate of domestic violence in the African continent shows that domestic violence is another form of health pandemic that needs to be rapidly addressed through prevention

and reduction measures. In South Africa, it has been approximated that the occurrence of a woman being killed by her spouse or romantic partner transpires every six hours, as evidenced by Kimani's study in 2007. Additionally, according to Kimani (2007), nearly 50% of homicide cases in Kenya in 2007 were attributed to incidents of domestic violence.

Similar to other nations in sub-Saharan Africa, Ghana also faces issues of domestic violence, which can be attributed to the prevailing structures of dominance and exploitation that are frequently perpetuated by the ideology of patriarchy (Ampofo 1993; Ofei-Aboagye 1994; Oyeridan and Isiugo-Abanihe 2005). According to a report by the National Coordinator of the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit in Ghana in 2010, 109,784 cases of violence against women and children were documented (Ghanaweb 2010).

In Ghana, traditional gender norms place a premium on male dominance and control permitting men to engage in extramarital relationships openly while assigning specific tasks to women in the community. However, this cultural norm in Ghana does not have the same level of freedom for women as compared to men when it comes to engaging in extramarital relationships (Ofei-Aboagye 1994). Cultural practices and beliefs reinforce male superiority through titles like "caretaker" and "queen mother," maintaining a male-dominated leadership structure. Historically, patriarchy in Ghana has ingrained a male-centered way of life, influenced societal norms and perpetuated patriarchal ideologies among both literate and illiterate segments of the society (Ofei-Aboagye 1994). These sociocultural norms may contribute to the proliferation of patriarchal ideology which set the tone for the neutralization techniques. Thus, certain societal and gender norms such as gender inequality, traditional beliefs (control over the partner), and family reputation in Ghana can reinforce the justification of IPV by both men and women (Amo-Adjei and Tuoyire 2015).

In Ghana, age can play an essential role in determining the acceptance or approval of IPV among men in Ghana. In Ghana, it is common in certain societies that women marry older men. This preference is often influenced by traditional beliefs, societal norms, and perceptions of maturity, wisdom, and financial stability associated with older men (Ofei-Aboagye 1994; Sedziafa, Pearl, Tenkorang, Owusu, and Sano 2017). Older men are frequently seen as financially secure and well-established, offering stability and assistance. This may create a total dominance in the marriage or relationship leading to one or both approving IPV due to the age of the man and the financial dependence of the woman on the man. In Ghana, 59.83 percent of the women justify IPV (Amo-Adjei and Tuoyire 2015).

The 2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) revealed that both the poorest men and women had higher odds of justifying wife-beating, highlighting the impact of economic factors on attitudes towards IPV. Understanding the role of wealth in IPV justification is essential therefore targeting the effect wealth status from the perpetrator's viewpoint will offer an understanding and improvement upon the interventions that address socio-economic factors contribute to IPV justification in Ghana. However, it is important to acknowledge that perspectives on marriage and financial security can differ among individuals and communities in Ghana, and not all women may place a high priority on financial stability when selecting a partner.

The justification of IPV in Ghana is a multifaceted issue influenced by a variety of factors. Research have highlighted several key variables that contribute to the justification of IPV in Ghana. These factors include but not such as age, wealth status, educational background, socialization, life experiences, employment status, religious and ethnic influences, gender dynamics, media exposure (Doku and Asante 2015; Amo-Adjei and Tuoyire 2015; Dickson et al.

2020; Darteh et al. 2021). The complex interaction of these factors intricately shapes individuals' beliefs and attitudes regarding the justification of IPV.

Considering the essentially patriarchal nature of Ghanaian society, it is vital that policies are developed to target solving this problem at the root, which is understanding the justifications these perpetrators give to their actions and how these could be desensitized. Research has primarily focused on IPV from the victim's viewpoint, with a growing interest in studying the perpetrators of IPV emerging only in recent years (Turton 2017; Darteh et al. 2021). Most studies use women (even though victims) as a yardstick to understand IPV or domestic violence even though research findings point to men being the perpetrators of IPV and women likely to being victims. Within the global landscape and more specifically to Ghana, there is scant information on the literature in looking at the issues from the perspective of men (Darteh and Amo-Adjei 2012; Amo-Adjei and Tuoyire 2016; Owusu Adjah and Agbemafla 2016; Tenkorag and Owusu 2018; Dickson et al. 2020). Darteh et al. (2021) have explore the factors associated with the justification of IPV among in Sub-Saharan Africa using data from the DHS of 27 countries. However, this study will provide the understanding of the issues of IPV from the perspective of men who are mostly the perpetrators of IPV using the GDHS 2014 and 2022.

Interestingly, in studying the subject matter of IPV, techniques of neutralization (Hawley 2020) have been employed. These techniques of neutralization have been shown to have a strong correlation in justifying IPV (Ibid). These warrants using a study focusing on the technique of neutralization that men incorporate to justify IPV and solves the above identified problems. According to (Sykes and Matza 1957; Hawley 2020), the neutralization technique is the best fit for understanding the behavior of IPV perpetrators within the context of intimate relationships. hence, this serves as a motivation to use the techniques of neutralization in the context of the

Ghanaian society. based on the above, this study aims to contribute to the literature by including in the discourse the justification of IPV perpetuation by men against women and what the effects of certain demographic characteristics are associated with IPV.

### **Research Questions**

Generally, the study seeks to understand the men's justification for perpetrating domestic violence or intimate partner violence against their sexual partners in Ghana using the demographic and health survey conducted in 2014 and 2022. More specifically, to fill literature gaps regarding the male perspective of analyzing IPV, the research seeks to explore the potential factors that influence IPV by answering the following questions.

1. What are the effects of age on IPV justification in Ghana?
2. What is the strongest IPV justification of men in Ghana?
3. How has IPV justification changed between 2014 and 2022 in Ghana?

## CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a review of prior research on intimate partner violence or domestic violence. In this review, I will discuss the life course approach which is central to this study and Sykes and Matza's (1957) neutralization technique; however, there are some other theoretical approaches such as feminist, cultural, and social learning theories that will shed light on offenders' motive in IPV (Ofei-Aboagye 1994; Kimuna, Tenkorang, and Djamba 2018; Cochran and Sellers, Wiesbrock, and Palacios 2011).

According to the life-course perspective, the physical, social, and biological contexts play an important part in influencing behaviors throughout the lifespan (Braveman and Barclay 2009). The idea that domestic and marital violence is a process rather than an event and that such processes are deeply rooted in a web of familial relationships is consistent with this perspective. For instance, according to Williams (2003), domestic violence occurs in a manner where each instance is directly connected to previous acts of violence or the possibility of violence, which adds complexity to the study. Some studies find that exposure to domestic violence and traumatic events in early years is closely linked to substance/alcohol misuse and violence perpetration (Kiene, Lule, Sileo, Silmi, and Wanyenze 2017; Machisa, Christofides, and Jewkes 2016; Lipsky, Caetano Field, Larkin 2005; Nduna, Jewkes, Dunkle, Shai, and Colman 2010).

### **Theoretical Background and Hypotheses**

The sociological explanation of criminality known as differential association theory, which Edwin Sutherland formulated, posits that individuals acquire techniques, motives, and attitudes related to criminal behavior through their interactions with individuals who engage in delinquent

acts (Sutherland 1939; Vinney 2019). Sutherland's differential association theory was shaped by the contributions of sociologists Shaw and McKay (1942), who conducted a comprehensive analysis of crime patterns in Chicago based on geographic factors. The concept of differential association originated from Sutherland's empirical investigation of individuals involved in theft who acquired knowledge and skills through interactions with other members of thief collectives (Vinney 2019). The theoretical framework of differential association posits that behavior, irrespective of its deviant nature, is acquired through social interactions rather than being inherent. Sutherland's theory was formulated by integrating concepts from Shaw and McKay and his own empirical investigations on thieves (Vinney 2019). Differential association can be applied to intimate partner violence (IPV) as it suggests that offenders engage in a learning process which includes both vicarious and experiential elements. The manifestation of these objectionable behaviors can be attributed to observing a violent incident and active involvement in a violent incident.

Deviant behaviors including intimate partner violence (IPV), is commonly perceived as a behavior that is acquired through the process of learning (Burgess and Akers 1966). This behavior tends to manifest when individuals are exposed to violence either within their immediate social circle or within their household (Burgess and Akers 1966). Cochran et al. (2011) attested that learning theories, such as differential association and social learning theory, can be applied to the study of intimate partner violence (IPV) due to the observation that individuals who engage in IPV, as well as their victims, often witness or experience violence during their formative years. These early experiences can potentially influence their subsequent behaviors in various relationships, particularly those of a romantic nature (Cochran et al. 2011).

Vicarious learning, as defined by Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1963), refers to the process of acquiring behaviors by observing others engage in said behaviors. These new behaviors can be developed, or the attributes of current response hierarchies can be significantly altered by observing others' behavior and the resulting consequences, without the observer engaging in any overt responses or receiving direct reinforcement during the acquisition period. As defined by Kolb (1984), experimental learning refers to learning and developing knowledge through active engagement in an experience. A delinquent has the potential to engage in criminal activities and, as a result, may exhibit a higher frequency of reoffending and potentially develop enhanced criminal capabilities through repeated engagement in criminal behavior. For instance, a bicycle robber may become more skillful when they keep stealing more bicycles, and they become more skillful in stealing bikes through this experimental learning. According to sociological theories like learning theory, differential association, and life course theory, individuals commit crimes or behavior defiantly through learning and association with peers who approve deviant behaviors and childhood experiences also plays a role in individuals committing crimes or approving deviant behaviors including IPV. Individuals commit crimes by regularly associating with peers who endorse deviant behaviors and imitating the behaviors of their peers. Additionally, individuals also commit crimes or approve deviant behaviors through life experiences such as childhood experience of IPV. Through imitation, differential association, reinforcement, definition, and childhood experiences, individuals develop techniques of neutralization to rationalize their deviant behaviors and evade responsibility. These theories will lay the foundation for a more in-depth explanation of understanding men's justification of IPV against their intimate partners.

## **Social Learning Theory**

Robert Burgess and Ronald Akers' social learning theory is frequently referenced in academic literature. This theory is derived from and expands upon Sutherland's differential association theory. The social learning theory consists of four key components, namely differential association, definitions, differential reinforcements, and imitation (Akers 1998; Burgess and Akers 1966; Cochran, Maskaly, Jones, and Sellers 2017). Research conducted by Akers (1998), Burgess and Akers (1966), and Cochran et al. (2017) indicate that differential association, as conceptualized within the framework of social learning theory, pertains to the experience of being exposed to circumstances that either promote or discourage engagement in delinquent behavior. This may involve regularly associating with peers who endorse delinquency as acceptable. The concept of definitions refers to the cognitive process through which an individual assigns meaning or significance to a particular behavior. When an individual who has committed an offense perceives a delinquent behavior as acceptable, they are inclined to mitigate any unfavorable implications associated with the behavior, thereby positively reinforcing their definition of it (Cochran et al. 2011). Imitation refers to replicating a behavior that an individual has observed and subsequently adopts as their own (Akers 1998; Burgess & Akers 1966; Cochran et al. 2017). For instance, if an individual witnessed a particular spousal dynamic during their childhood that involved the use of violence as a form of punishment, they may imitate this behavior by employing violence against their spouse. Differential reinforcement refers to applying positive or negative consequences to an individual's behavior, including instances of partner violence. For example, a perpetrator's act can influence an outsider positively or negatively; therefore, when a child sees their mother being abused and the mother reports it to the police, then it will negatively reinforce the child to repeat

such abuse in the future, but if abuse is not reported, it will positively influence the child to abuse a partner in later life considering it as a norm.

Men who witnessed their mother being abused are more likely to engage in intimate partner violence (IPV), according to psychosocial concepts from the Social Learning Theory (Cochran et al. 2011). Social learning theory and techniques of neutralization are linked through observational learning and reinforcement (Ibid). In social learning theory, individuals acquire behaviors by observing others and the outcomes of those behaviors. When it comes to techniques of neutralization, individuals may witness others employing these strategies to rationalize deviant behavior and evade feelings of guilt or accountability (Ibid). Through observation and reinforcement, individuals may adopt these neutralization techniques to justify their own deviant actions. This theory demonstrates that people acquire behavioral patterns by witnessing and emulating influential figures in their social surroundings. It is premised on the assumption that individuals learn through observation and imitation. This may probably be because men may become exposed to abuse in their early life, where they begin to normalize and endorse intimate partner violence.

The effects of age on IPV in Ghana can be significant, as highlighted by (Tenkorang and Owusu 2018; Dickson et al. 2020). Specifically, the age at which violence is experienced and childhood experiences of violence, particularly before the age of 15, can have lasting implications on future victimization and perpetration of IPV. The continuity of violence from childhood into adulthood increases the odds of IPV involvement (Tenkorang and Owusu 2018). Moreover, the timing of violence is crucial, with violence experienced after age 15 having a more significant effect on IPV outcomes compared to violence before age 15. Additionally, the 2014 Ghana Demographic Health Survey (GDHS) demonstrated that individuals between the age of 15-24 were

more likely to endorse abusing intimate partner in comparison to those in the 35-49 age group (Dickson et al. 2020). This assertion influenced the research question on the effects of age on IPV justification in Ghana.

### **Differential Association Theory and Neutralization Theory**

Sutherland (1939) posited that criminal behavior is acquired through social interactions with peers, such as family members and close friends. This process involves acquiring both criminal techniques and justifications for engaging in criminal activities (Boyle and Walker 2016; Tittle, Burke, and Jackson 1986). Sutherland's theory consists of nine assumptions that posit the acquisition of criminal behavior through interpersonal interaction and communication with peers. These forms of communication may involve discussions on methods of engaging in illegal activities, identifying locations conducive to committing crimes, or providing justifications for committing criminal acts.

In the context of intimate partner violence (IPV), if an individual feels like the benefit of beating or abusing their partner outweighs the cost then they will continue with this activity but if the cost outweighs the benefit, then they will not follow through. However, it should be noted that not all differential associations are alike. The duration, intensity, frequency, and priority of associations may exhibit variability. Criminal behavior has been posited to reflect underlying values or needs potentially; however, it is essential to note that values and needs alone do not provide a comprehensive explanation for such behavior (Sutherland 1939; Vinney 2019). There is a dual-function mechanism of differential association encompassing both the process of learning and rationalization as proposed by Akers, Krohn, Lanza-Kaduce, and Radosevich (1979). Thus, the acquisition of delinquent behavior through learning and the subsequent rationalization of such behavior and the significance of rationalizations becomes apparent when considering the analysis

of strategies to alleviate feelings of guilt arising from actions that deviate from societal expectations.

Differential association theory's dual nature can be utilized to illustrate different manifestations of delinquency, such as intimate partner violence (IPV) or domestic violence (DV). In this context, for instance, there is a possibility that an offender of intimate partner violence (IPV) or domestic violence (DV) may have learned the act from the home where there has been an abuse from parents. Whenever violence occurs within the household and is not effectively resolved, such as through law enforcement intervention, it is reinforced positively and subsequently becomes a learned response that is deemed acceptable. A prospective perpetrator may manifest comparable aggressive conduct within an intimate relationship and justify such behavior by drawing upon the positive reinforcement they have previously encountered or learned. Based on the tenets of differential association theory, it can be posited that instances of intimate partner violence (IPV) would be unlikely to transpire in the absence of a partner acquiring knowledge of violent conduct or if the reinforcement of such behavior does not yield positive outcomes.

#### *Techniques of Neutralization*

Techniques of Neutralization are justifications used by individuals to excuse their deviant behavior (Sykes and Matza 1957). These techniques allow delinquents to justify their deviant behavior and reduce the guilt or shame associated with it. Sykes and Matza (1957:141) critically identify five essential neutralization techniques that delinquents use to justify their deviant behavior and reduce the guilt or shame associated with it. These techniques are denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of the victim, condemnation of the condemners, and appeal to higher loyalties. According to Sykes and Matza (1957), acquiring these techniques leads to delinquency and the formation of ideas and attitudes that oppose societal norms.

The techniques of neutralization theory, when applied to the evaluation of intimate partner violence (IPV), refer to an interaction effect that weakens the connection between societal norms and IPV (Tomita 1990). Hawley (2020) provides an illustration of this phenomenon, which can be observed when an individual engages in acts of physical violence towards their partner but receives only a warning because of mitigating factors (such as law enforcement's failure to thoroughly investigate mutual combativeness). In such cases, the offender may perceive the absence of punitive actions as a validation or justification for perpetuating the violent behavior. The identification of the prevalence of these neutralization techniques may facilitate the identification of potential treatment interventions for individuals who have engaged in intimate partner violence (Hawley 2020). The extant body of scholarly research about the rehabilitation of offenders, with a specific focus on intimate partner violence (IPV), indicates that the implementation of cognitive behavioral therapy has demonstrated efficacy in mitigating the likelihood of reoffending (Cotti, Foster, Haley, and Rawski 2020).

Sykes and Matza (1957) formulated the theory of neutralization as a response to the notion that culprits adhere to a distinct set of values and beliefs that diverge from those held by people in general (Moore and McMullan 2009). In Ghana, individuals who perpetuate IPV justify their behaviors through the techniques of neutralization which are mostly rooted in the cultural system, such as gender roles which often encourage male dominance and control over women (Ofei-Aboagye 1994). Therefore, throughout the life trajectories of men, they are socialized to these cultural beliefs. Sykes and Matza argue that delinquent behavior is not simply a result of a lack of moral values or a pathological personality but rather a learned behavior that is rationalized and justified through the use of techniques of neutralization (Sykes and Matza 1957), which is an extension of with Sutherland's differential association theory discussed above which posits that

individuals learn criminal and delinquent behavior through their interactions with others. Sykes and Matza (1957:666, 667) argued that delinquents are not entirely committed to deviant values and attitudes but instead use techniques of neutralization to suspend their commitment to conventional values and attitudes temporarily and they went on to argue that delinquents are not completely alienated from society, but rather recognize the legitimacy of the dominant social order and its moral “rightness.”

The goal of neutralization techniques is to provide delinquents with a way to justify their deviant behavior and reduce the guilt or shame associated with it (Sykes and Matza 1957). Hawley (2020) asserted that more than half of the convicted Texas intimate partner violence (IPV) or domestic violence (DV) offenders had at least one neutralization technique prevalent in their statements to police. It is crucial to acknowledge that the theory of neutralization, when applied to the evaluation of intimate partner violence (IPV), does not function as a direct causal factor. Instead, it functions as a synergistic effect that diminishes the correlation between societal norms and intimate partner violence (Tomita 1990).

Sykes and Matza’s identification of the five neutralization techniques in delinquent behaviors: denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of the victim, condemnation of the condemners, and appeal to higher loyalties. For this study, the justification of IPV in Ghana is: if the wife goes out without telling the husband, if the wife neglects the children, if the wife argues with the husband, if the wife refuses to have sex with the husband, and if the wife burns food. According to the survey questionnaire, the justification questions were included to find out the possible reasons respondents deemed as “acceptable” rationales to justify IPV. According to Sykes and Matza (1957), there is a belief that acquiring these techniques leads to delinquency and the formation of ideas and attitudes that conflict with established societal norms. There has also been

considerable research conducted on the subject of neutralization techniques, particularly in the about the defense of bribery (Joseph 2019), serial murder (James 2019; James and Gossett, 2018; Pettigrew 2020), sexual violence (Boyle and Walker 2016), and theft (Copes 2003; Moore and McMullan 2009).

The denial of responsibility is one of the five major types of techniques of neutralization identified by Sykes and Matza (1957). This technique involves the delinquent defining themselves as lacking responsibility for their deviant actions, which reduces the disapproval of self or others as a restraining influence. Delinquents may claim that their deviant acts were an “accident” or due to forces outside of themselves, such as unloving parents, evil companions, or a slum neighborhood. By doing so, they deflect blame attached to violations of social norms and may see themselves as helplessly propelled into new situations. The authors suggest that this technique is a cultural construct and not merely an idiosyncratic belief and that it is critical in lessening the effectiveness of social controls and lies behind a large share of delinquent behavior. For example, when a male or man lousy abuses his partner, they use this technique to deny their responsibility by switching it to the influence of a bad community or unloving parents, as asserted by Sykes and Matza.

Denial of injury is another one of the five major types of techniques of neutralization identified by Sykes and Matza (1957). This technique involves the delinquent admitting responsibility for their deviant actions but denying that they caused any actual harm or injury. Delinquents may argue that their actions were justified because they were directed against an unworthy or deserving victim or that the victim was not really harmed because they had insurance or could afford to replace the stolen property. By doing so, they neutralize the moral indignation of self and others and reduce the guilt or shame associated with their deviant behavior. The authors

suggest that this technique is critical in lessening the effectiveness of social controls and lies behind a large share of delinquent behavior. For example, men may justify wife-beating because the wife refuses to have sex with them. Men believe that as long as they are married to a woman, they deserve sex anytime they want it. Another example would be that the wife neglects the child or children instead of taking care of the child because it is the woman's responsibility to take care of the house while men provide for the house.

Denial of the victim is another one of the five major types of techniques of neutralization identified by Sykes and Matza (1957). This technique involves the delinquent denying the victim's existence or transforming them into a person deserving of injury. Delinquents may argue that their victims were not innocent or deserved what they got because of their actions. By doing so, they neutralize the moral indignation of self and others and reduce the guilt or shame associated with their deviant behavior. The authors suggest that this technique is critical in lessening the effectiveness of social controls and lies behind a large share of delinquent behavior. For instance, the perpetrators use this type of technique of neutralization to justify that their victims (intimate or wife) are in the context of intimate partner violence (IPV) or domestic violence (DV) when the partner goes out without telling the partner or neglecting the children.

Another significant neutralization technique identified by Sykes and Matza (1957) is the condemnation of the condemners. This technique involves the delinquent shifting the focus from their deviant acts to the motives and behavior of those who disapprove of their violations. The delinquent may claim that their condemners are hypocrites, deviants in disguise, or impelled by personal spite. By doing so, they neutralize the moral indignation of self and others and reduce the guilt or shame associated with their deviant behavior. This technique may be of particular importance when it hardens into a bitter cynicism directed against those assigned to enforce or

express the norms of the dominant society. The authors suggest that this technique is critical in lessening the effectiveness of social controls and lies behind a large share of delinquent behavior.

Appeal to higher loyalties is the last type of technique of neutralization identified by Sykes and Matza (1957) that I would talk about. This technique involves the delinquent justifying their deviant behavior by appealing to a higher loyalty or obligation. The delinquent may argue that their actions were necessary to protect or defend their family, friends, or community or to advance a political or religious cause. By doing so, they neutralize the moral indignation of self and others and reduce the guilt or shame associated with their deviant behavior. The authors suggest that this technique is critical in lessening the effectiveness of social controls and lies behind a large share of delinquent behavior. For instance, a perpetrator of domestic violence (DV) will justify the abuse of the wife or intimate partner by saying that the wife denied them sex and that the wife may not want to give birth or just doesn't want to have sex with the partner which is his (perpetrator's) right in marriage because the practice of bride-price presents further avenues through which men justify the abuse of women (Hague, Thiara, and Turner 2011; Dery 2015) and also show their authority and power over their wives (Sikweyiya et al. 2020).

In the case of refusing to have sex with a husband, individuals may employ techniques of neutralization by justifying their actions through the belief that they have the autonomy to make decisions regarding their partner's body and sexual intimacy, and culturally in the Ghanaian society, it is sometimes acceptable (Dickson et al. 2020; Darteh et al. 2021). This can be seen as a form of "denial of responsibility," thereby perpetrators justifying their actions because of their wife/partner's refusing to have sex with them caused their actions. This is very common in the Ghanaian society since men pay bride price for a woman to the wife's parents, this can be seen as

selling a woman to the man/husband, which makes it seem like the husband has every right to have sex with their wife whenever they want and abuse them if the wife refuses.

When it comes to the justification of the wife burning food, individuals may use techniques of neutralization to rationalize their action, such as “condemning the condemners” by highlighting this in the Ghanaian that cultural norms and gender roles to justify their actions, such as women are supposed to be in the kitchen. At the same time, men go out and find money to take care of the house. Therefore, they blame the wife/partner for burning the food to justify their violent behavior, “why would a woman who is supposed to know everything when it comes to cooking or kitchen activities?” and “even some referring to the kitchen as office for the woman” (Ofei-Aboagye 1994; Amo-Adjei and Tuoyire 2016). “Appeal to higher loyalties” can be used by men prioritizing their perceived authority when it comes to the household or using cultural norms like patriarchy and gender roles to justify their actions if the wife burns food.

In the context of the justification for arguing with their husband, individuals may utilize techniques of neutralization to rationalize their conflicts, such as “denial of the victim” by downplaying the impact of arguments and emphasizing that it is a normal part of relationships by arguing that disagreements are necessary for addressing problems within the relationship. Still, the perpetrator may use the “denial of the victim” to show that they need to maintain control in the relationship/marriage since they are the head of the family. Ghanaian culture expects men to pay the bride price, which is a traditional custom where the groom or his family gives gifts or money to the bride’s family, as mentioned above. This practice can affect how people perceive ownership, control, and gender roles in relationships, as well as the dynamic of power (Amo-Adjei and Tuoyire 2016). Cultural norms such as patriarchy and gender roles within Ghanaian society also play a role in the context of justification of the wife arguing with her husband.

Additionally, for the justification of neglecting a child, individuals might employ techniques of neutralization by using “denial of the victim” to downplay the impact of neglect of a child or “condemning the condemners” by shifting the focus to external factors or blaming the wife or partner for neglecting the child which provokes the justification. By doing so, perpetrators deflect accountability and place the blame on the partner, thereby justifying their actions and saying that they deserved to be abused because the wife or partner neglected the child.

### **Life Course Perspective**

The life course perspective emerged during the 1960s as a framework for analyzing the impact of structural or contextual elements on the trajectories of individual life histories (Elder and Shanahan 2007). Throughout the years, scholars in the fields of sociology and demography have utilized this theoretical framework to analyze significant life occurrences, such as marriage, divorce, morbidity, and mortality (George 1993; Uhlenberg 1996). In recent times, scholars in the field of family studies have employed this approach to examine the intricate aspects of family dynamics and incidents of domestic violence. The life course theory is supported by several fundamental concepts, which contribute to its utility in elucidating the relationship between early life experiences and the perpetration of violence (Tenkorang and Owusu 2018).

The concept that human development is a continuous process provides a rationale for scholars’ focus on the interconnectedness of life experiences across an individual’s life (Elder 1995; Elder and Shanahan 2006). The importance of a child and individual growth is rooted in the socialization of the family, according to life course theorists, and as such, the development of children’s attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs is linked to parental influences. The individual’s early exposure to violence can significantly shape an individual’s future trajectory through the influence of parents. The influence of the family on a child’s long-term outcomes highlights the significance

of contextual factors in human development, such as the child's cultural and socio-economic environment. According to Etherington and Baker (2016), there is a possibility that the presence of certain structural and contextual factors, such as poverty, unemployment, and gender norms, could play a role in either moderating or mediating the connections between early childhood encounters with violence and subsequent experiences or engagement in domestic violence. The life course theory establishes a connection between early childhood encounters with violence and the ensuing involvement in or exposure to violence. However, it recognizes that these occurrences may not follow a linear or sequential pattern. Instead, the theory acknowledges the presence of significant "turning points" or alterations in an individual's life trajectory that have the potential to disrupt the cycle of violence (Etherington and Baker 2016).

Throughout the life course, individuals undergo an acculturation process where they absorb cultural norms, beliefs, and values through socialization at various life stages. This process plays a vital role in molding individuals' behaviors, attitudes, and interaction over time (Tenkorang and Owusu 2018; Dickson et al. 2020; Darteh et al. 2021). Cultural norms impact socialization from childhood, influencing individuals' decision-making across their lifespan. As individuals move through different life stages, they internalize cultural influences that shape their identities and how they respond to societal expectations. Additionally, cultural norms establish roles and expectations based on age, gender, and social status, guiding individuals through transitions in life (Tenkorang and Owusu 2018). Therefore, perpetrators particularly men acquire culturally specific coping strategies and techniques, incorporating cultural beliefs, norms, and values to justify their deviant behaviors in the context of IPV perpetration in Ghana.

The life course perspective also plays an important role in explaining how the history of IPV can perpetuate men's justification of violence against an intimate partner later in life.

Essentially, the life course perspectives employ a temporal and social lens to examine people's past experiences to and to better understand their present mental, physical, and social health (Hing et al. 2021). This method acknowledges that the health and well-being of individuals varies throughout their lives and at different stages of their lives and that contextual factors have an impact on these experiences; hence, earlier experiences influence later experiences, but people still have agency over their decisions and actions (Hutchison 2003). To better understand the role of the life-course approach in explaining IPV justification among men, there is a need to consider four issues: cohort, trajectory, transitions, and turning point (Hing et al. 2021).

A cohort is a collection of people who share the same social history and were born during the same historical era. This social history shapes their opinions, values, and behavior. Trajectory, in the context of the life-course approach, refers to a long-term phase or pattern in a person's life, such as a job or a marriage. These comparatively stable phases may be broken up by transitions, which are momentary changes that occur when one stage of life ends, and another one begins and involves adjustments to roles and status. Examples of transitions include children's birth, breaking up with a partner, or getting remarried. The final piece of the life-course approach is the "turning point" which refers to a significant and long-lasting change in course that is brought about by life events that create or eliminate new opportunities, result in long-lasting contextual changes, or modify a person's expectations, beliefs, or self-concept (Hing et al. 2021). Bringing these pieces into focus, men (i.e., cohort) who are exposed to IPV during their life trajectory and transitions are more likely to internalize and normalize violence perpetuation against an intimate partner. Men in Ghana who experience IPV during their life trajectory are prone to internalizing and normalizing violence perpetuation against their intimate partners (Tenkorang and Owusu 2018; Dickson et al. 2020). This inclination is influenced by factors like social learning, where exposure to IPV shapes

their views such as acceptable or normal within relationships. This normalization process can lead to the perpetuation of violence in future intimate relationships, as individuals may replicate the behaviors they have witnessed or experienced (Dickson et al. 2020). Hence, resulting in the justification of IPV (i.e., the turning point). Policy makers are inclined towards examining these critical junctures, as implementing interventions during these periods could potentially disrupt the pattern of violence (Etherington and Baker 2016).

According to the life course perspective and family violence standpoint, early experiences and events may have an impact on adult behaviors in close relationships not only over the course of a lifetime, but also across generations (Solinas-Saunders 2008). Tenkorang and Owusu (2018) revealed that Ghanaian women who have experience childhood violence are more likely to be victimized by their intimate partners when they became adults. Additionally, women who experienced childhood violence are more likely to perpetrate violence against their partners/husbands. Moylan Herrenkohl, Sousa, Trajima, Herrenkohl and Russo (2010) revealed that the presence of child abuse, domestic violence heightens the likelihood of negative internalizing and externalizing outcomes during adolescence for a child. Thus, the exposure of IPV in early years may contribute to the beliefs and increase of IPV at a young age between the ages of 15 to 24 as compared to individuals aged 35 to 49 due to individual life experiences, shift in priorities towards stable relationships, maturity, empathy towards others, changes socioeconomic conditions, and personal growth throughout their life course (Tenkorang and Owusu 2018; Dickson et al. 2020). However, an increase in IPV justification later in life may be a change in societal trends, personal stressors, and reassessment of values during later life transitions (Tenkorang and Owusu 2018).

Several studies have explored the theoretical connections between early childhood exposure to domestic violence and the development of behavioral, emotional, and social difficulties. Notable works in this area include those by (Davies, Evans, and DiLillo 2008; Devaney 2015; Kitzmann, Gaylord, Holt, and Kenny 2003; Meltzer, Doos, Vostanis, Ford, and Goodman 2009; and Osofsky 2003). Several prior studies have demonstrated empirical associations between child maltreatment and long-term health complications (Norman et al. 2012; Springer, Sheridan, Kuo, and Carnes 2003). Tenkorang and Owusu (2018) also found that individuals whose experiences with violence continued from early childhood to adulthood are more at risk of victimization and/or victimizing others and that perpetrating violence against husbands could also lead to women's victimization.

Narayan, Englund, and Egeland (2013) argued that exposure to early interparental violence (EIPV) in early childhood, as well as externalizing behavior in childhood and adolescence, are significant developmental predictors of dating violence perpetration and victimization in early adulthood. According to Perkins and Graham-Bermann (2012), argued that it is contended that the behavioral consequences experienced by children who have been exposed to violence may vary depending on factors such as the developmental stage of the child, the severity of the violence, and the specific form or type of violence. The timing of violence exposure and the developmental stage of the child during exposure can complicate our understanding of the underlying mechanisms linking violence exposure to school-related functioning. Additionally, it is observed that being exposed to violence, especially within the family, can hinder the typical development of a child and result in developmental paths that may give rise to difficulties in forming relationships with peers, particularly in challenging social environments like school. Nevertheless, a crucial aspect of this discourse pertains to the temporal aspects and consistency of violence, as scholars have

identified varying behavioral consequences associated with childhood violence occurring at different points along the developmental continuum. The justification of IPV generally decreases with age, but it may begin to increase around late middle age. This shift is shaped by factors such as life experiences, cultural norms in tolerance for violence, and generational distinctions (Tenkorang and Owusu 2018; Dickson et al. 2020). Older individuals, having accumulated more life experiences and wisdom, often exhibit a reduced tolerance for violence and a deeper awareness of its harmful effects. Conversely, younger individuals may be more susceptible to societal norms and peer influences due to their limited life experiences (Dickson et al. 2020). Cultural norms and values related to gender roles also play a role, with older generations potentially raised in environments where violence was more normalized. Younger generations, exposed to changing societal attitudes, tend to display lower acceptance of IPV. Generational differences in views on gender equality, power dynamics, and conflict resolution further contribute to the varying levels of justification for IPV (Ibid).

In this study, there are some critical conceptual issues that must be considered. The significant concepts include the concept of intimate partner violence, the history of intimate partner violence, and the justification of intimate partner violence. The concept of intimate partner violence may vary across different contexts and social structures. Nevertheless, there is consensus from previous literature that intimate partner violence is a composite concept that is constituted by the perpetuation or experience of sexual, physical, and/or emotional abuse or violence from an intimate partner (Tenkorang and Owusu 2018; World Health Organization 2012). According to the WHO (2012), the physical element of intimate partner violence may include acts such as slapping, hitting, punching, beating, or kicking an intimate partner.

The emotional components of intimate partner violence may include acts of intimidation, insults, name-calling and abusive teasing, humiliation, and verbal threats to harm (WHO 2012). The sexual element of intimate partner violence may include sexual exploitation, rape, sexual coercion, and sexual harassment. According to the WHO (2012), not only is intimate partner violence limited to conventional physical, emotional, and sexual violence, but it also includes controlling behaviors from an intimate partner. That is situations where an intimate partner decides to restrict one's movements, associations, and access to resources and health care. The second concept is the history of intimate partner violence. The history of IPV is the experiences of victims or perpetrators in their previous life, especially in their childhood. Therefore, childhood exposure refers to experiences or events that an individual either personally encountered or observed before reaching the age of 18. The history of IPV includes witnessing sexual abuse as a child, witnessing the abuse of a mother by a father or boyfriend, experiencing physical abuse as a child, experiencing emotional abuse as a child, and experiencing parental neglect as a child; all these can lead to future perpetration of IPV.

According to the study conducted by Chirwa et al. (2018), a noteworthy correlation was discovered between observing inter-parental violence and developing attitudes that support violence against women. The research also revealed a link between experiencing violence during childhood and engaging in intimate partner violence (IPV) in adulthood. This aligns with previous research on the intergenerational transmission of violence against women (Abramsky, Watts Garcia-Moreno, Devries, Kiss, Ellsberg, Jansen, and Heise 2011; Islam, Tareque, Tiedt, and Hoque 2014; Yount, Pham, Minh, Krause, Schuler, Anh, and Vander Ende 2014). Men who witnessed their mother being abused are more likely to engage in intimate partner violence (IPV), according to psychosocial concepts from the Social Learning Theory as discussed above. This

theory has shown that individuals learn how to behave through observing and imitating important individuals in their social environment. It is premised on the assumption that individuals learn through observation and imitation. This may probably be because men may become exposed to abuse in their early life, where they begin to normalize and endorse intimate partner violence.

In this study, justification of intimate partner violence is another key concept. This concept is concerned with how the techniques of neutralization are used in explaining the justifications of IPV as rationales for committing IPV. Some related studies have indicated that justification of intimate partner violence can be assessed by looking at whether women think their intimate partner is justified in abusing them under five circumstances, namely: going out without telling him, neglecting the children, arguing with him, refusing to have sex with him and burning food (Darteh, Dickson, Rominski and Moyer 2021; Doku and Asante 2015). Available evidence suggests that justification of intimate partner violence is significantly associated with community and individual response to violence (Darteh et al. 2021; Tran, Nguyen and Fisher 2016). That is, when women condone or endorse intimate partner violence, they become less likely to report such occurrences, and the community they find themselves in is less likely to take any actions against perpetrators of this act of violence. In Ghana, women are traditionally expected to be submissive to their male partners. This is manifested through their acceptance of and lack of response to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse from their male partners, as well as their role in taking care of their husbands in the domestic sphere (Amoakohene 2004; Ofei-Aboagye 1994). This may explain why women condone violence from their male partners, and therefore, it seems like our culture justifies that women can be abused.

According to various theories, feminist perspective (Anderson 2017), cultural perspective (Amo-Adjei and Tuoyire 2015), life course theory (Tenkorang and Owusu 2018), and subculture

of violence theory (Wolfgang and Ferracuti 1982), domestic violence is a problem that affects not only the individual but also the family and society as a whole in Africa therefore, these theories will provide an understanding of why domestic violence is a problem. Feminist analyses of domestic and marital violence highlight the significance of patriarchy, male hegemony, and exertion of control. The central claim of this framework is that patriarchal systems' structurally embedded unequal power relations led to violence against women (Black et al. 2010), and feminist scholars posit that domestic violence is intrinsically linked to gender and power dynamics, serving as a manifestation of men's deliberate endeavors to uphold their dominance and exert control over women (Anderson 2017). Other feminist scholarship emphasizes that domestic violence is a direct outcome of patriarchy, a socio-cultural system that perpetuates male dominance through the allocation of power to exert control over women (Dobash and Dobash 2017; Hamberger et al. 2017). Furthermore, other scholars such as (Graaff and Heineken 2017; Moolman 2017; Ratele 2015) have also claimed that domestic violence is commonly linked to the ideology of masculinity, which encompasses the acceptance and promotion of patriarchal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that are instilled in men during their socialization process. For example, women in Ghana are expected to be subservient to their male partners, as evidenced by their acceptance of and lack of reaction to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse from those partners, as well as by caring for their husbands in the home (Amoakohene 2004; Ofei-Aboagye 1994). Ofei-Aboagye (1994) noted that marital violence was primarily a result of women's subordinate position, their passivity, and their economic dependence on their male partners in one of the pioneering works on domestic violence in Ghana.

Therefore, from a feminist standpoint, marital violence in Ghana can only be addressed as a part of a more significant effort to understand gender inequality, intersectionality, and power

imbalance. Age and wealth play a significant role in shaping attitudes towards intimate partner violence (IPV) by intersecting with power dynamics, gender inequality, and societal norms (Darteh et al. 2021). In societies where men typically hold more power, traditional gender roles heavily influence perceptions of IPV. Older men, who have been socialized with strict gender norms, are more likely to reject IPV, whereas younger men, influenced by societal expectations and aggressive tendencies, may be inclined to justify it. Individuals living in poverty, who have been exposed to violence and lack education on gender equity, may exhibit higher acceptance of IPV. Additionally, economic status can contribute to increased aggression, perpetuating a culture where IPV is normalized (Darteh et al. 2021). Recognizing and understanding these complex dynamics is crucial for effectively addressing IPV across various social contexts. Some studies based on this viewpoint found some association between socio-economic status and domestic violence or intimate partner violence among women (Bates, Schuler, Islam, and Md. Khairul Islam 2004; Kiss Schraiber, Heise, Zimmerman, Gouveia, and Watts 2012). According to Dickson et al. (2020) socioeconomic status significantly influences the justification of IPV, with individuals from lower wealth categories more likely to support wife-beating compared to those in higher wealth brackets. Kiss et al. (2012) asserted that women in middle-class societies had experienced domestic violence by their partners. The presence of gender inequity and power imbalances within sexual relationships can be closely associated with restricted access to educational and training opportunities for women. This ultimately results in their ongoing reliance or dependence on men economically. Women residing in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Ghana, encounter significant constraints in their ability to obtain cash and credit and access employment opportunities within both the formal and informal sectors (Brent et al. 2000; UNICEF 2000). These circumstances result

in women experiencing economic disadvantages and increased susceptibility to physical, emotional, and sexual violence.

Cultural explanations of domestic violence that emphasize tradition, customs, and norms within the African culture as important in maintaining such violence are closely related to the feminist model. In the majority of African societies, including Ghana, wife beating, and other forms of violence are seen as normal and acceptable. According to Ofei-Aboagye (1994), it is common for Ghanaian women to take the blame after their husbands have physically abused them to the point of being close to death. However, this study will be focusing on life-course theory to neutralization techniques to help understand intimate partner violence from the male's perspective. From a cultural standpoint, attitudes towards justifying intimate partner violence (IPV) are shaped by age and wealth in specific cultural settings. Older individuals, often regarded as upholders of traditional values, tend to prioritize respect and peaceful relationships, resulting in less acceptance of IPV justification (Darteh et al. 2021). Conversely, younger individuals, influenced by contemporary societal norms and media exposure, may be more inclined to rationalize IPV, influenced by factors like peer influence and media portrayals of violence thus, differential association and social learning theory. In terms of wealth, cultural perceptions of power dynamics play a role in IPV justification, as individuals of higher socioeconomic status may feel more entitled to exert control over their partners. On the other hand, individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may justify IPV as a way to navigate economic hardships (Darteh et al. 2021). Recognizing and understanding these cultural nuances is essential for gaining insight into how individuals interpret and justify violence within intimate relationships. According to Bowman (2003b), the power dynamics inherent in traditional African marriages give rise to a distinct context for the occurrence of marital violence. Consistent with this viewpoint, previous

studies have identified socio-cultural factors, such as a wife's endorsement of violence and a husband's controlling behavior, as significant contributors to domestic and marital violence (Heilman 2010). In many African societies, including Ghana, wife beating, and other forms of violence are seen as normal and acceptable. Some cultures view husbands as having sole custody of their wives and support domestic violence (Almadi 2016).

Culture has been found to legitimize patriarchy and preserve male supremacy by embracing and promoting hegemonic masculinity, a configuration of gender practices that guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women (Dobash and Dobash 2017; Mazibuko 2017; Sikweyiya et al. 2020). Therefore, cultural norms and traditions that reinforce gender inequality and negative masculine constructs contribute to domestic violence in South Africa (Mshweshwe 2020). Cultural norms significantly shape individuals' life trajectories and experiences by influencing socialization and development from childhood. These norms define roles and expectations based on age, gender, and social status, impacting transitions throughout the life course (Tenkorang and Owusu 2018). Moreover, cultural norms guide individuals in navigating key life transitions, accessing social support networks, and developing coping strategies. Recognizing the interplay between cultural norms and the life course is essential in understanding the techniques of Neutralization employed by men to justify IPV. Ahmadi (2016) asserts that Ghana's deeply ingrained patriarchal culture prioritizes the exclusive rights of husbands over those of their wives, thereby tolerating domestic violence. In relation to this assertion, the majority of Ghanaian women are told that to succeed in life, they must find a husband and provide for him in a way that upholds gender roles and continues his lineage because their husbands are their superiors, breadwinners, and protectors, wives are told they should be socially inferior to them thus, breeds domestic violence (Ofei-Aboagye 1994).

The reluctance to report abuse can be attributed to the prevailing cultural belief in Ghana that domestic violence should be resolved internally rather than through legal channels (Ahmadi 2016), this decision is frequently influenced by feelings of shame, discouragement, and disheartenment. Even when women do file criminal complaints, the majority of their cases are never heard in court; they are stigmatized by society, and very few convictions result from these claims. It is also observed that individuals in positions of power who are responsible for aiding victims in seeking justice often exert influence to convince and urge women to retract their complaints and return to their abusive relationships, to maintain harmony within the community (Ibid).

Studies have revealed that cultural factors play a significant role in influencing domestic violence in the context of Ghanaian traditional beliefs and societal norms can contribute to the normalization of domestic violence (Ofei-Aboagye 1994). Research has indicated that gender roles in various cultures often promote male dominance and power over women, resulting in instances where men resort to violence to dominate their partners (Ofei-Aboagye 1994; Amo-Adjei and Tuoyire 2015). Moreover, the participation of extended family in marital affairs can compel victims to remain in abusive relationships in order to preserve family cohesion. Cultural norms that accept or justify domestic violence, combined with societal disapproval and embarrassment related to reporting abuse, may hinder victims from seeking help. Lack of sufficient legal protection for victims, financial reliance on abusers, and the association of masculinity with aggression can contribute to the continuation of domestic violence (Ofei-Aboagye 1994). Whereas Kimuna et al. (2018) highlight how the feminist explanation of IPV contributes to IPV when traditional gender roles perpetuate IPV by upholding women's inferiority and men's authority in relationships. Additionally, IPV stems from imbalanced power relations between men and women,

sustained by cultural norms that support male authority and men's belief in theory superiority can rationalize violence against women. Feminists recognize intersectionality and the ways that socioeconomic class, ethnicity, and other factors influence how women experience IPV. However, even though these studies make a significant contribution to the understanding IPV and domestic violence, there is a lack of diverse perspectives from marginalized groups and did not highlight the understanding of how IPV is justified by the perpetrators only through the life course approach to how perpetrators the perpetrators rationalize these violent behaviors.

In a related study, a statistic from Participatory Development Associates (PDA), there were 12,706 cases of domestic violence in 2010 in Ghana; 954 of those cases were sent to the court, and only 118 convictions out of the 954 cases were obtained in 2010 alone. Dutton (1995) also asserted that males who abuse their intimate partners are shaped by a patriarchal culture they (men) use as a way of justification for their abuse of women in intimate relationships. According to Ahmadi (2016), one additional factor contributing to domestic violence or intimate partner violence in Ghana is a traditional belief system that equates marriage with consent. Individuals who are married use that as a justification of IPV especially if the wife refuses to have sex with the husband. It is rooted in the traditional beliefs that women must be submissive to the husband. The societal expectation for women to be submissive can result in unequal power dynamics within relationships, which may escalate to intimate partner violence (IPV). This cultural mindset undermines the effectiveness of the domestic violence victim support unit of the Ghana police service (DOVVSU) efforts. The prevalence of intimate partner violence among Ghanaian women was reported to be 20.6 percent. In comparison, 44.5 percent of women had experienced physical or sexual abuse from either their intimate partners or non-partners, as indicated by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) in 2008. The United Nations identifies various institutionalized

sociocultural factors that not only elicit but also sustain and strengthen violence against women, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, including Ghana (UNICEF 2000). Various cultural factors, such as wife inheritance and dowry payments, coerced marriages, widowhood rites, female genital mutilation, and the practice of “trokosi” (Amoah 2007; Amoakohene 2004; Ampofo 1993), have been imposed upon Ghanaian women, including those who are married. These practices are aimed at exerting control over their sexuality and sexual behaviors. Additional factors that are deeply ingrained in the cultural values of Ghanaian society and are evident in the socialization process of both men and women include the belief in the innate superiority of men and the tolerance of violence as a method for resolving conflicts within intimate relationships (Borwankar, Diallo, and Sommerfelt 2008; Brent, Blanc, Gage 2000; Jejeebhoy and Bott 2003; UNICEF 2000).

In Ghana, studies utilizing a life course perspective have found that domestic violence denies women their fundamental human rights, undermines their independence, and reduces their chances of achieving financial independence (Sedziafa et al. 2017) thus, through the life course perspective, the long-term consequences of domestic violence on women’s financial independence are evident, as it intersects with various factors like gender norms and economic inequality. This disruption caused by domestic violence in women’s life trajectories can obstruct their chances for education and career growth, strengthening patterns of reliance and vulnerability. Therefore, since 2015, countries within the United Nations Assembly have ratified the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), also known as Agenda 2030. Those SDGs are supposed to drive policy and interventions until 2030. Among the goals of the SDGs, target 5.2 seeks to eliminate all forms of violence against women, including intimate partner violence (Yount, Cheong, Khan, Bergenfeld, Kaslow, and Clark 2022).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was findings regarding the impact of intimate partner violence. Several studies have shown a rise in incidents of domestic violence and intimate partner violence during both the pandemic outbreak and the period following the outbreak (Campbell 2020; Moreira and Pinto da Costa 2020; Chang, Chang, Jou, Hsu, Goh 2023). The pandemic, in conjunction with societal stressors, inadvertently led to a rise in instances of nonphysical abuse, which frequently progresses to physical violence, especially within marginalized communities (Smith-Clapham, Childs, Cooley-Strickland, Hampton-Anderson, Novacek, Pemberton and Wyatt 2023). In the United States, there was a notable surge in reports of domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic, with an increase from 21% to 23% (Ibid). The implementation of stay-at-home orders, intended to safeguard the general population from the transmission of COVID-19, inadvertently led to elevated levels of illicit substance and alcohol consumption, unemployment, and social isolation (Smith-Clapham et al. 2023). Additionally, the pandemic significantly affected families, resulting in heightened stress and anxiety, a troubling surge in domestic violence, shifts in family dynamics due to remote work and homeschooling, and difficulties in ensuring children's well-being (Chang et al. 2023). Consequently, these circumstances contributed to heightened stress levels and instances of nonphysical abuse (such as psychological, emotional, economic, and technological abuse), which frequently escalated into physical violence and the limitations imposed by lockdowns may have inadvertently trapped individuals in abusive relationships (Smith-Clapham et al. 2023; Chang et al. 2023).

A significant limitation of Chirwa, Sikweyiya, Addo-Lartey, Ogum Alangea, Coker-Appiah, Adanu, and Jewkes (2018) study was the unavailability of data at the community level that could have helped in better understanding of societal factors contributing to IPV perpetration. The findings of that study cannot be generalized to the entire population of Ghana, but they do

offer valuable empirical evidence on which primary violence against women prevention intervention can be established and act as a benchmark for the rural response system (RRS) intervention to reduce gender-based violence. Dekeseredy, Hall-Sanchez, and Rennison (2016) emphasize the significance of the intersectionality of class, race, ethnicity, and gender in understanding IPV patterns among rural women. The authors argue that the influence of patriarchal norms in rural communities exposes rural women to violence in a variety of aspects of their lives, including gender roles and power dynamics.

This study intends to use the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) 2014 and 2022, which is more updated than the previous GDHS 2008 and a representation of the whole country, therefore it can be generalized. Again, most of the prior studies focused mainly on the victimization of women without looking at what may have contributed to the perpetration of intimate partner violence over the life course of male offenders. Therefore, this study will look at the life course of male offenders to overcome such challenges or limitations of the prior studies, which will be explained from a theoretical perspective like the neutralization techniques.

Laub and Sampson (1993) underscore the concept of turning points in individuals' life courses and their impact on criminal behavior trajectories. They highlight that turning points can be positive (e.g., stable employment) or negative (e.g., incarceration), influencing individuals towards or away from criminal activities. These significant events can alter life trajectories, emphasizing the need for interventions at critical junctures. The authors stress the dynamic nature of adaptation to turning points, where different responses lead to diverse outcomes. They also discuss how turning points interact with social bonds, either reinforcing or weakening informal social controls. Understanding this interplay is crucial in comprehending factors influencing criminal behavior. Therefore, recognizing the role of turning points provides insights into the

dynamic evolution of individuals' behaviors in response to life events. However, in Ghana, the specific reasons for the turning points that occur for men throughout their life course are not fixed because across life trajectories, socioeconomic conditions, number of children, marriage, and life experiences on account of age provide different lessons which could increase the justifications (neutralizations) of IPV. Based on this, the study hypothesizes that:

*H1: Age has a curvilinear association with the likelihood of IPV justification.*

*H2: Age has an association with wife refusing to have sex with the husband.*

*H3: Age has an association with wife going out without telling her husband.*

*H4: Age has an association with wife burning food.*

*H5: Age has an association with wife neglecting the child.*

*H6: Age has an association with wife arguing with the husband.*

### CHAPTER 3 - SAMPLE AND MEASUREMENT

The data used in this study was obtained from the 2014 and 2022 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) employing the men recode (MR) file. The GDHS is a dataset that represents the entire nation and is managed by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) and Macro International. It is the fifth and sixth survey in the Global Demographic and Health Surveys Program. The Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) captures data on various aspects such as health and wellbeing, family planning, fertility, maternal and child health, education, nutrition, and household amenities, including issues of domestic violence. The DHS program has historically collected specific data on intimate partner violence among ever-married women. These women are currently married or living with a man as if married, or they were previously married or lived with a man as if married (Ghana Statistical Service 2022).

The domestic violence module offers insights into the occurrence of interpersonal violence against women, encompassing physical, sexual, and emotional assaults (Ghana Statistical Service 2009). This module provides an understanding of the type of abuse or violence that the perpetrators (men) inflict on their partners. The GHDS 2022 module was revised to capture intimate partner violence experienced by never-married women who had ever had an intimate partner. This module does not address men's experiences of domestic violence or intimate partner violence. It specifically excludes the term "boyfriend" as an intimate partner but focuses on women who have had an intimate partner or husband. As a result, it provides a comprehensive overview of the abuse that victims encounter, which perpetrators often attempt to rationalize by claiming that their victims deserve it.

The World Health Organization's ethical and safety guidelines on domestic violence provided the GDHS with specific safeguards that they incorporated into the questionnaire (see Ghana Statistical Service 2009; World Health Organization 2001). Using a multi-stage sampling process, the GDHS first selected households from Enumeration Areas (EAs), and then from those households, individuals were chosen. The 2014 and 2022 GDHS were conducted using an updated frame from the 2010 and 2021 Population and Housing Census, prepared by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) respectively. The survey employed a two-stage sample design in order to obtain accurate estimates of core indicators on a national scale. In the beginning, a set of sample points (clusters) were chosen for the 2010 and 2021 PHC. These clusters were identified within enumeration areas (EAs). A total of 427 clusters were designated for the 2010 PHC, with 216 from urban areas and 211 from rural areas. For the 2021 PHC, 618 clusters were designated, with 295 from urban areas and 323 from rural areas. In the second stage, a systematic sampling method was employed to select households. This involved conducting a household inventory operation in all the identified enumeration areas (EAs). Subsequently, the households included in the survey were chosen randomly from the list.

The GHDS sample is a nationally representative sample consisting of 9396 women and 4388 men, aged 15-49 and 15-59 respectively, in the year 2014. The sample consists of 13,517 women and 7,044 men aged 15-49 and 15-59, respectively, in 2022. Additionally, the sample was filtered for men only since the aim is to evaluate techniques of neutralization amongst the male population in Ghana. However, the samples for this study were (n=4387 and n=7,044) men in 2014 and 2022 respectively because of non-response and the application of listwise deletion.

Dependent Variable – IPV Justification

Approval or justification of wife-beating is the outcome of the study. Specifically, I examine justifications of a husband to beat/abuse the wife/partner under five conditions: (1) the wife burns the food; (2) the wife neglects the children; (3) the wife argues with the husband; (4) the wife goes out without telling the husband; and (5) wife refuses to have sex with the husband. Each justification question had a dichotomous response option of YES or NO. When considering the justification items of IPV among men in Ghana, they are valid indicators of techniques of neutralization; it is important to understand how individuals may rationalize their behaviors within the context of intimate partner relationships.

Based on these items, a summative index was created with scores from 0 to 5. A score of 0 indicates the respondent did not approve of any of the justifications, while scores of 1 to 5 indicate they agreed with one or more of the justifications (Adjah and Agbemafle 2016; Doku and Asante 2015; Dickson, Ameyaw and Darteh 2020). I assessed the internal consistency of the index using the Cronbach alpha. This is the most common measure utilized to evaluate the reliability or internal consistency of a set of scales or test items (Kotian, Liz Varghese, and Motappa 2022). Generally, a higher value indicates heightened internal consistency and reliability of the measuring instrument. The coefficient from 0 to 1 signifies more excellent reliability as it approaches 1 (Amirrudin, Nasution, and Supahar 2020). Cronbach's alpha values of 0.70 or greater are generally considered acceptable (Kotian, Liz Varghese, and Motappa 2022). The index items show high internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.9$ ).

Although inferences can be made about associations between dependent and independent variables, causal inferences cannot be drawn. Even though some scholars have questioned the reliability of surveys based on self-reports, especially when they border on sensitive issues like violence within marriages (Tenkorang, Owusu, Yeboah, and Bannerman 2013). It is thus possible

that physical and sexual violence will be under-reported, especially among married couples, given the stigma and other related consequences attached to reporting such incidents in most African societies (Tenkorang et al. 2013; Amo-Adjei and Tuoyire 2016; Tenkorang and Owusu 2018). This notwithstanding, the attempt by GDHS to include a module on domestic and marital violence and the circumstances surrounding such incidences is helpful given the general lack of large-scale quantitative studies on this subject, especially for Ghana. The GDHS 2014 and 2022 has focused and expanded on the role that culture and patriarchy play in perpetuating marital violence in Ghana. Given the relevance of the life-course variables, this study will focus on variables that capture respondents' life course trajectories and linked lives.

#### Focal Independent Variables – Age

This study focuses on males aged 15-59 years. Age was measured as a continuous variable rather than being categorized into interval groups. By considering age as a continuous variable, the study was able to analyze the data more precisely, allowing for a detailed examination of the non-linear relationship between age and the justification of IPV perpetration. To account for a curvilinear relationship between the independent and dependent variables, a linear and squared term was included in the model. Additionally, essential like including squared terms allows the model to capture curvilinear effects, which is essential if the link between the variables is suspected to be not strictly linear but rather follows a U-like shape pattern (Simonsohn 2018). Again, adding the linear term can be used to test hypotheses about increasing and decreasing effects. For instance, as age increases, the justification of IPV would be expected to decrease. Still, at continues, but at a certain point, which is the transition, as age continues to increase, justification for IPV perpetration may also tend to grow.

#### Control Variables

For the control variables, marital status (married and living with a partner), educational attainment/level (no education, primary, secondary, and higher), Characteristics of the relationship: Number of Children and the length of the marriage or relationship. I also controlled for type of place of residence (urban, rural), religion (no religion, Christianity, Islam, other religion), which was recorded as Christian = 1; Islam = 2; Traditional/Spiritual = 3; other = 4, wealth index (poorest, poorer, middle, richer, richest) and occupational status. Ethnicity and religion were included because of the results of inconsistencies in arguments about their influence as the justification of intimate partner violence (IPV) or domestic violence in the literature (Adjah and Agbemafle 2016; Conroy 2014). The inclusion of these variables as control variables was since other studies have used it in their research to test whether these variables affect the justification of IPV. Especially marital status as a control variable in the analysis of the acceptability of IPV, and it has been found that individuals who are married are likely to justify IPV against women, and they will justify wife beating for some reasons (Bukuluki, Kisaakye, Wandiembe, Musuya, Letiyo, and Bazira 2021; Kadengye, Izudi, Kemigisha, and Kiwuwa-Muyingo 2023).

Educational level was included as a control variable when testing the justification of wife beating since it has been found that individuals with lower educational levels approve of IPV (Dickson et al. 2020), same as residence (urban and rural) have been found that individual who resides in the rural areas may be likely to approve IPV and Wealth status as well was related to all the justification of IPV (Doku and Asante 2015). An individual who belongs to the other wealth index other than the richest were more likely to justify. Additionally, religious affiliation was also included due to the inconsistencies in their influence of the justifications of IPV (Conroy 2014;

Doku and Asante 2015; Dickson et al. 2020). According to the literature, ethnicity and occupational status were also related to the justifications of IPV (Doku and Asante 2015).

More than half of the respondents in the data live in rural areas (47% and 53%) and (46% and 54%) in 2014 and 2022, respectively. The ages of men ranged from 15 to 59, representing (mean = 32, SD = 12.13) and (mean = 32, SD = 12) in 2014 and 2022, respectively. A significant number of respondents (26.3%) and (26.1%) in 2014 and 2022 respectively are within the poorest wealth category. The results showed that a lot of the respondents (men) had attained secondary education 59.1 % in 2014 and 2022, and few respondents had attained higher education (10.1%) and (10.2%). According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, Christianity is Ghana's biggest religion with 67% and 61.7% for 2014 and 2022 respectively (Ghana Statistical Services 2010; Dickson, Darteh, and Kumi-Kyereme 2017).

The justification of wife beating: if wife refuses to have sex with husband (2014: 5.7% and 2022: 6.1%); if wife argues with husband (2014: 6.9% and 2022: 10.2%); if wife burns food (2014: 3.2% and 2022: 2.5%); if wife neglects the children (2014: 9.8% and 2022: 11.2%); and if wife goes out without telling the husband (2014: 7.7% and 2022: 9.0%).

#### Analytical Strategy

This study will use an ordinary least square (OLS) for estimating the first set of regression models of the justification index. I also utilized logistic regression for a second set of models for each justification item which is measured as a binary (i.e., justification has been dichotomized as 'Yes' or 'No').

The study uses the OLS model since the variables will be utilized to estimate the linear regression of the relationship between the dependent variable (the justifications of IPV) and one or more independent variables. The OLS regression method is employed to analyze the effect of

the independent variables, such as age, on the combined dependent variables, which are if the wife refuses to have sex with the husband; if the wife argues with the husband; if the wife burns food; if the wife neglects the children; and if the wife goes out without telling the husband. The OLS chosen was chosen because it is the best linear unbiased estimator under certain conditions. When these conditions are satisfied, OLS generate parameter estimates that minimize the sum of squared residuals, which represents the squared differences between observed and predicted values. However, to examine the association between the sociodemographic variables and each of the justification variables that is: if wife refuse to have sex with husband; if wife argues with husband; if wife goes out without telling husband, if wife burns food; and if wife neglects the children, the binary logistic regression was utilized.

Two models were constructed: Model 1 reports for age and age squared as against the justification of intimate partner violence variables and Model 2. This Model looked at the socio-demographic variables such as age, residence, ethnicity, religion, years of marriage/relationship, marital status, and occupation on the justification for wife-beating. However, five models were fitted: model 1 reports for the association between the sociodemographic variables and if wife refuse to have sex with husband, model 2 reports for the association between the sociodemographic variables and if wife goes out without husband, model 3 reports for the association between the sociodemographic variables and if wife burns, model 4 reports for the association between the sociodemographic variables and wife neglects children, and model 5 reports for the association between the sociodemographic variables and if wife argues with husband.

## CHAPTER 4 -RESULTS

### Descriptive Results

Table 1 shows the average age of respondents who agreed or disagreed with the justifications for IPV amongst males in Ghana from 2014 to 2022. As illustrated in Table 1, it indicates age showing a negative correlation with agreeing to the justification of IPV or domestic violence against intimate partners in both years (i.e., 2014 and 2022). This demonstrates that as the possibility of these justifications of IPV behaviors increases the possibility of intimate partner violence tends to decrease. The effect size, as measured by Cohen’s D values, shows a weak to moderate association between age and justification, and the corresponding T-score show statistical significance for the association ( $p < .001$ ).

*Table 1. 2014 and 2022*

<b>Panel A: 2014</b>				
<b>Dependent variables</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Cohen's D</b>	<b>T-score</b>
wife beating if wife neglect the children	32.59	29.9	-0.22	4.273***
wife beating if wife burns food	32.49	27.37	-0.41	4.895***
wife beating if wife goes out without telling husband	32.51	30.15	-0.19	3.226***
wife beating if wife refuses to have sex with husband	32.48	29.9	-0.21	3.159***

Wife beating if wife argues with husband	32.51	29.9	-0.21	3.319***
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<b>Panel B: 2022</b>				
<b>Dependent Variables</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Cohen's D</b>	<b>T-score</b>
wife beating if wife neglect the children	32.35	28.55	-0.32	8.377***
wife beating if wife burns food	32.09	25.55	-0.54	8.046***
wife beating if wife goes out without telling husband	32.13	29.81	-0.19	4.502***
wife beating if wife refuses to have sex with husband	32.12	28.82	-0.27	5.324***
Wife beating if wife argues with husband	32.29	28.73	-0.29	7.365***

The negative correlations and significant effects in both years (2014 and 2022) indicate the existence of some of the actions, such as ignoring children, burning food, going out without telling the husband, refusing sex, or arguing with the husband. These bivariate results provide valuable understandings into the intricate dynamics encompassing intimate relationships and have the potential to guide interventions aimed at diminishing such violence. This indicates that as individuals age, they are less likely to believe these justifications. Such as, there is belief in the justification of IPV, but then there is a diminishing value as individuals get older, but at some stage, the belief of IPV begins to attain higher levels. However, the bivariate estimates of the association show that age may have a non-linear effect on beliefs in justified IPV. However, this

analysis is limited only to the linear association therefore, to hypothesize the curvilinear association I tested for the non-linear association with the multivariate analysis.

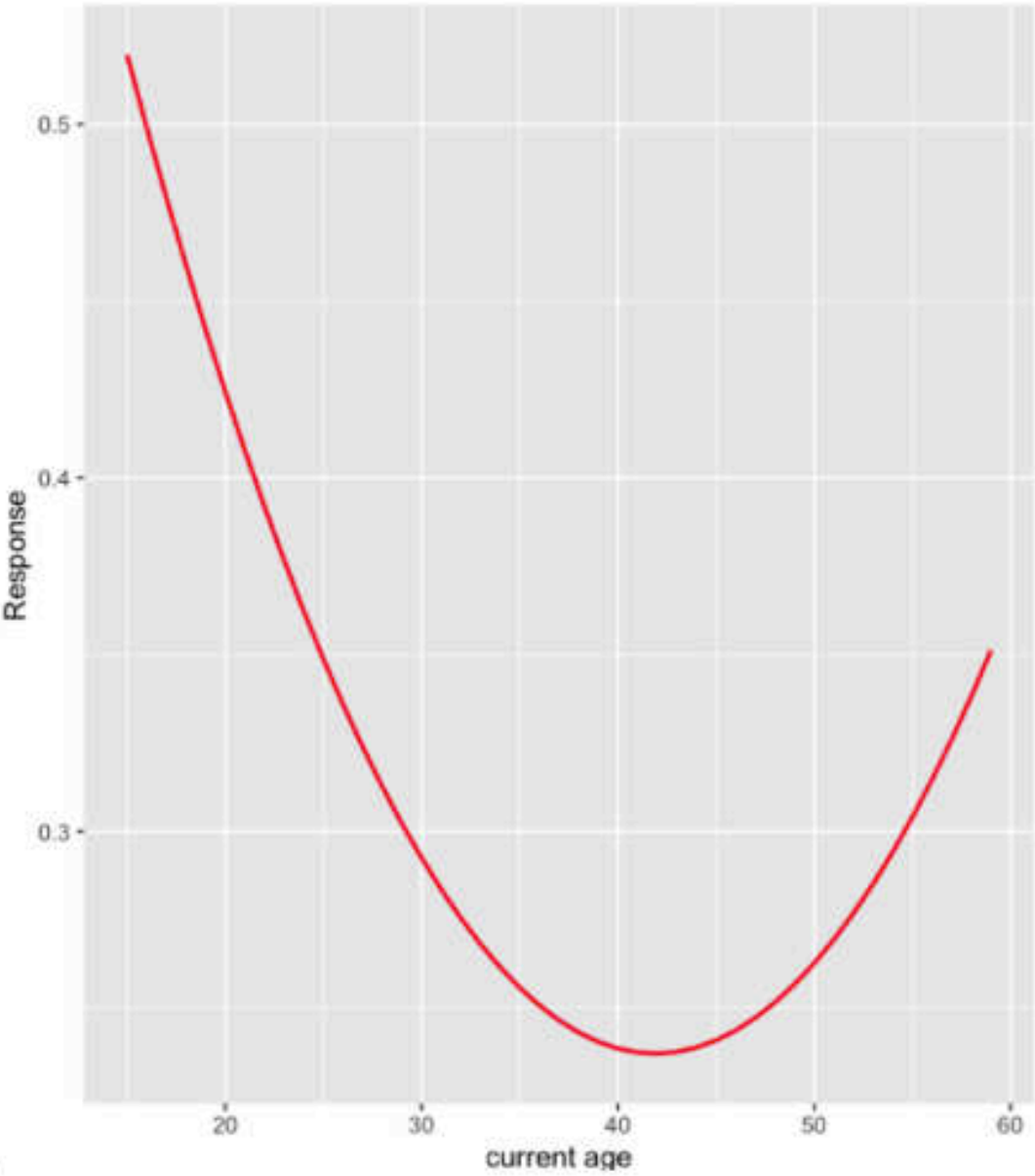
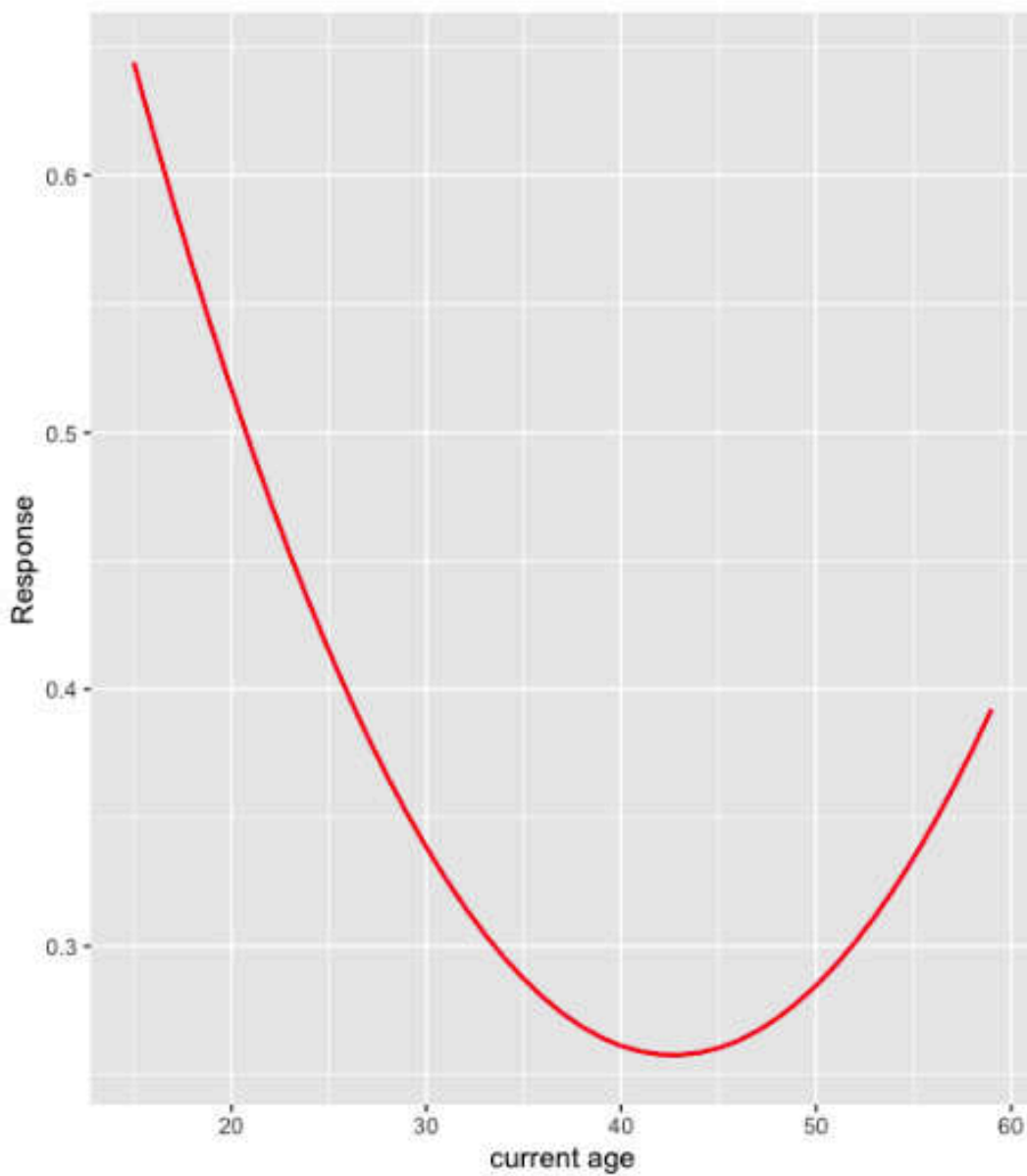


Figure 1. Curvilinear Graph Effect 2014 (Justify by Age)



*Figure 2. Curvilinear Graph Effect 2022 (Justify by Age)*

The graphs above suggest that age may have a curvilinear association with justification of intimate partner violence. Figure 1 and 2 indicates that age may have a curvilinear association with the justification of IPV in 2014 and 2022. It shows that there is a higher level of belief in the

justification of IPV at a younger age, but it decreases as individuals get older. However, after age 45, the belief of justification of the IPV increases again until about age 59.

### Regression Results

Table 2 and 3 presents OLS regression models of the justification index in 2014 and 2022. The first model only includes age and age squared to measure the curvilinear association. In both 2014 and 2022, the linear term of age exhibits a negative association with the justification index, and the squared term of age exhibits a positive association with the index ( $p < .001$ ). This indicates that the likelihood of rationalizing IPV diminishes at earlier ages amongst men but increases with subsequent aging, which supports the first hypothesis on the age curve of IPV justification.

*Table 2. OLS Regression 2014*

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Model (1)	Model (2)
	justify	
age	-0.033*** (0.007)	-0.036*** (0.008)
age2	0.0004*** (0.0001)	0.0004*** (0.0001)
Wealth		-0.035* (0.016)
Residence		0.002 (0.038)
Central region		0.223** (0.072)
Western region		0.270*** (0.069)
Greater Accra		0.134 (0.073)
Volta region		-0.088 (0.071)

Eastern region	0.199** (0.070)
Ashanti region	0.067 (0.070)
Brong Ahafo region	-0.016 (0.064)
Northern	0.523*** (0.063)
Upper west region	0.616*** (0.067)
Gurma	0.365*** (0.064)
Mole-Dagbani	-0.137** (0.044)
Catholic	0.100* (0.043)
Islam	-0.016 (0.041)
No religion	0.259*** (0.060)
Traditional/spiritual	0.217*** (0.066)
Married	-0.058 (0.046)
Partnered	-0.012 (0.060)
Educational level	-0.046* (0.021)
Managers	-0.016 (0.089)
Professional	-0.102 (0.054)
Unemployed	-0.175*** (0.047)
Length of relationship/marriage	-0.007

		(0.015)
Number of children		0.010 (0.007)
Constant	0.922*** (0.110)	1.003*** (0.164)
Observations	4,336	4,336
R <sup>2</sup>	0.009	0.112
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.009	0.106
Residual Std. Error	0.935 (df = 4333)	0.888 (df = 4308)
F Statistic	19.950*** (df = 2; 4333)	20.082*** (df = 27; 4308)
<i>Note:</i>	*p< 0.05; ** p< 0.01; *** p<0.001	

Table 3. OLS Regression 2022

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	(1)	(2)
	justify	
age	-0.043*** (0.005)	-0.037*** (0.006)
age2	0.001*** (0.0001)	0.0004*** (0.0001)
Wealth		-0.036** (0.012)
Residence		0.048 (0.027)
Central region		0.096 (0.066)
Western region		0.191** (0.067)
Greater Accra region		-0.064 (0.066)
Volta region		-0.128 (0.069)
Eastern region		0.030

	(0.067)
Ashanti region	-0.071 (0.063)
Western North region	-0.071 (0.065)
Ahafo region	0.018 (0.064)
Bono region	0.116 (0.066)
Bono East region	-0.111 (0.061)
Oti region	-0.036 (0.064)
Northern region	0.351*** (0.060)
Savannah region	0.542*** (0.060)
North East region	0.180** (0.063)
Upper West region	0.469*** (0.062)
Gurma	0.032 (0.044)
Mole-Dagbani	0.095** (0.032)
Catholic	0.008 (0.038)
Islam	0.071* (0.030)
No religion	0.095 (0.051)
Traditional/spiritual	0.107 (0.055)
Married	-0.065 (0.036)

Partnered		-0.006 (0.050)
Educational level		-0.063*** (0.015)
Managers		-0.079 (0.069)
Professional		-0.095* (0.043)
Unemployed		-0.013 (0.038)
Length of relationship/marriage		0.020 (0.012)
Number of children		0.004 (0.006)
Constant	1.177*** (0.087)	1.082*** (0.127)
Observations	6,993	6,993
R <sup>2</sup>	0.018	0.118
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.017	0.114
Residual Std. Error	0.934 (df = 6990)	0.887 (df = 6959)
F Statistic	62.708*** (df = 2; 6990)	28.226*** (df = 33; 6959)
<i>Note:</i>	*p< 0.05; **p< 0.01; ***p<0.001	

The second model re-estimates the curvilinear association between age and the justification index when controlling for other factors related to IPV and aging. Model 2 shows indicates a significant negative association in both years ( $\beta_{2014} = -0.035$ ;  $\beta_{2022} = -0.036$ ) between wealth and the justification index ( $p < .05$ ). This suggests that men with higher wealth status have a higher likelihood of approving of wife beating as compared to other wealth status.

A range of region influences the tendency for justification. Model 2 indicates that certain regions, such as the Central region ( $\beta_{2014} = 0.223$ ) at  $p < .01$ , Western region ( $\beta_{2014} = 0.270$ ;  $\beta_{2022} =$

0.191) at  $p < .001$  and  $p < .01$  respectively, Eastern region ( $\beta_{2014} = 0.199$ ) at  $p < .01$ , Northern region ( $\beta_{2014} = 0.523$ ;  $\beta_{2022} = 0.351$ ) at  $p < .001$ , and Upper West region ( $\beta_{2014} = 0.616$ ;  $\beta_{2022} = 0.469$ ) at  $p < .001$  using Upper East region as a reference region display notable positive correlation, Savannah region ( $\beta_{2022} = 0.542$ ) at  $p < .001$ , North East region ( $\beta_{2022} = 0.180$ ) at  $p < .01$  displays a positive association or correlation due to the additional creation of the region.

Religion had an inconsistent effect on the approval of wife-beating in Model 2 in both years, while Christians who belong to the catholic denomination ( $\beta_{2014} = 0.100$ ) shows significant association to the justification of wife-beating at  $p < .05$ , Islam region ( $\beta_{2014} = -0.016$ ) was not likely to approve of wife-beating but research participants who do not belong to any religious denomination ( $\beta_{2014} = 0.259$ ) are likely to justify wife-beating at  $p < .001$  and the same observation was made for men who belong to the traditional/spiritual denomination ( $\beta_{2014} = 0.217$ ). However, the dynamics had changed whereas Catholics ( $\beta_{2022} = 0.008$ ) were not likely to approve of wife-beating as well, as respondents who do not belong to any religion ( $\beta_{2022} = 0.095$ ). There was no significant association with traditional/spiritual ( $\beta_{2022} = 0.107$ ), there was a significant association ( $\beta_{2022} = 0.071$ ) between Islam and the justification index ( $p < .05$ ).

There was a significant association ( $\beta_{2014} = 0.365$ ) and significant negative association ( $\beta_{2014} = -0.137$ ) between Gurma, Mole-Dagbani, and justification index ( $p < .001$  and  $p < .01$ ) respectively, whereas Gurma ( $\beta_{2022} = 0.032$ ) were not likely to approve wife-beating however, there was a significant association ( $\beta_{2022} = 0.095$ ) between Mole-Dagbani and justification index ( $p < .01$ ) using the Akan and Ewe ethnic groups as reference.

There was a negative significant association as compared to research participants ( $\beta_{2022} = -0.046$  and  $\beta_{2022} = -0.063$ ) between educational level and the justification index ( $p < .05$  and

$p < .001$ ), respectively. This shows that the more someone attains education, they are less likely to agree to wife-beating than those without any form of education.

It was realized that there is no association between men who are married ( $\beta_{2014} = -0.058$ ;  $\beta_{2022} = -0.065$ ) or living with a partner ( $\beta_{2022} = 0.012$ ;  $\beta_{2022} = -0.006$ ), indicating that they were not likely to approve of wife-beating using other marital statuses as reference. Also, it appears that there is a negative association ( $\beta_{2014} = -0.175$ ) between unemployment and the justification index ( $p < .001$ ). This indicates that those who are unemployed are likely to approve of wife-beating compared to those who are employed however, there is a negative association ( $\beta_{2022} = -0.095$ ) between professional workers and the justification index ( $p < .05$ ) thus, individuals who are engaged in professional occupations as illustrated in model 2 exhibit a correlation with reduced levels of endorsement of wife-beating in comparison to those who are not employed in professional occupations. It was also realized that the length of a relationship or marriage ( $\beta_{2014} = -0.007$ ;  $\beta_{2022} = 0.020$ ) and the number of children ( $\beta_{2014} = 0.010$ ;  $\beta_{2022} = 0.004$ ) given birth to does not have any association with the approval of wife-beating in both years. There is an indication that there was a curvilinear association between age and the justification index when controlling for the other covariates. The findings support the proposed hypothesis, demonstrating a curvilinear association with the justification of IPV as anticipated when controlling for the other factors in model 2.

Plot predictions graphs 2014 and 2022 respectively.

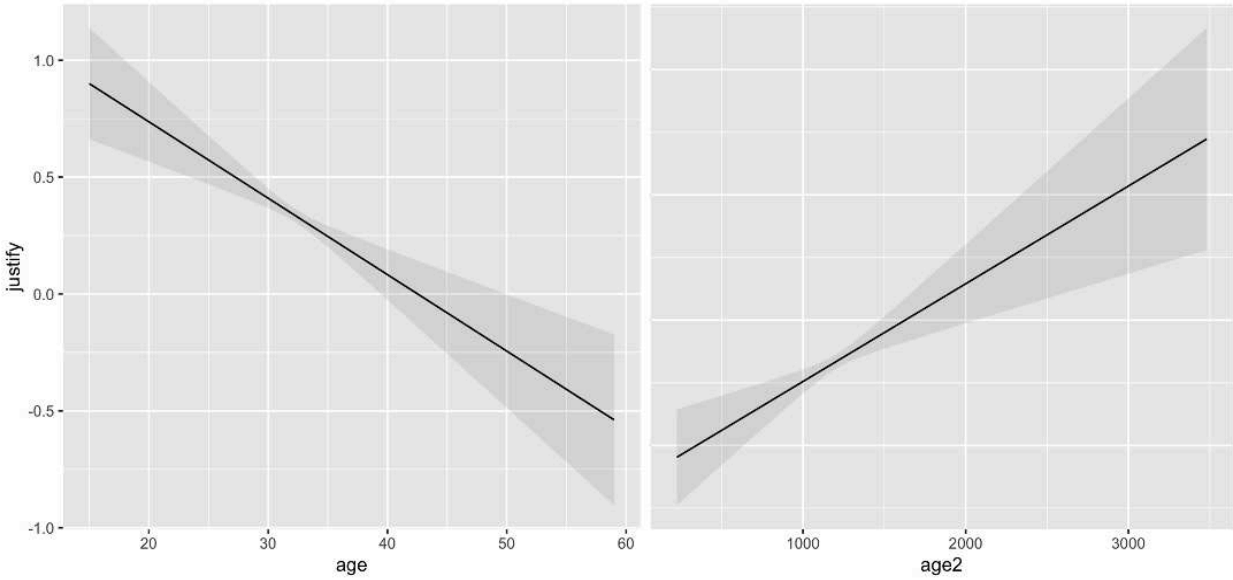


Figure 3. Plot Prediction Graph 2014.

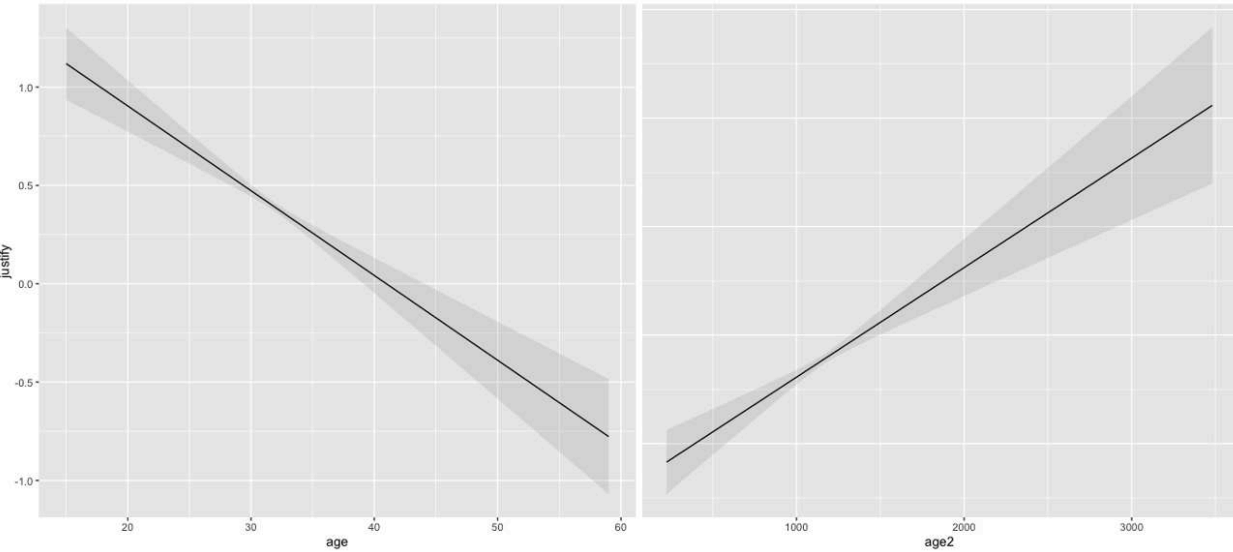


Figure 4. Plot Prediction Graph 2022

The linear regression plot predicts a positive relationship between age and the justification of intimate partner violence, as indicated by the downward-sloping line. The curvilinear prediction plot demonstrates that the relationship between age and the rationale for IPV is non-linear. Previously, as age increases, the belief in the justification of IPV tends to decrease. However, beyond a certain stage rationale for, age corresponds to the rise in the justification of IPV, suggesting a U-like shape relationship. This might imply that the belief of justification decreases as age increases to a certain point, after which the rationale for IPV increases again. The curve's shape is consistent in both years from model 1 of 2014 and 2022. (figures 3 and 4)

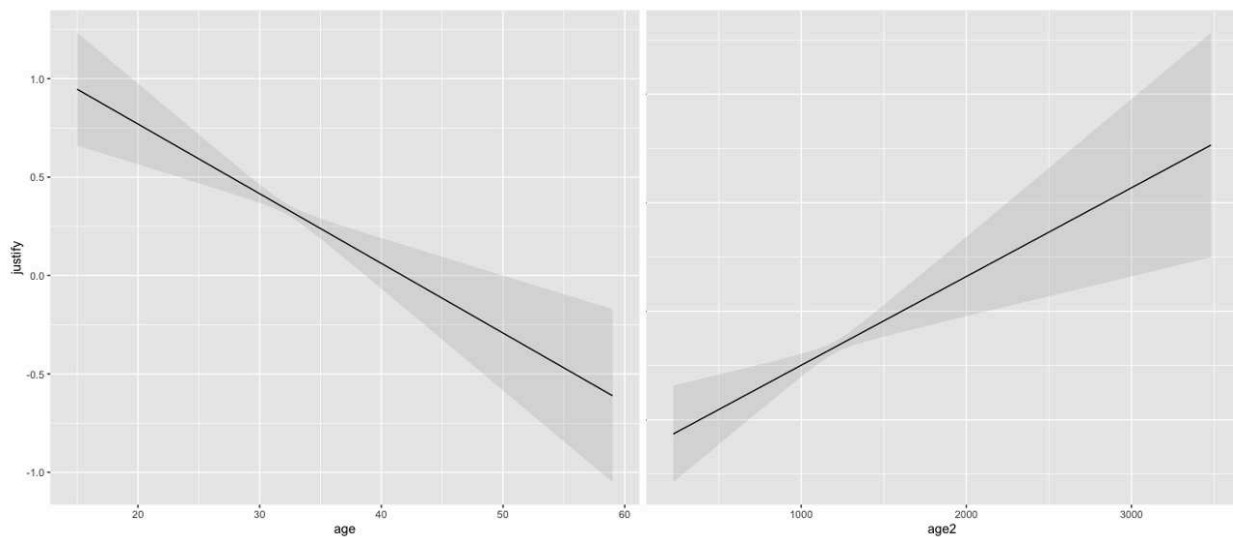
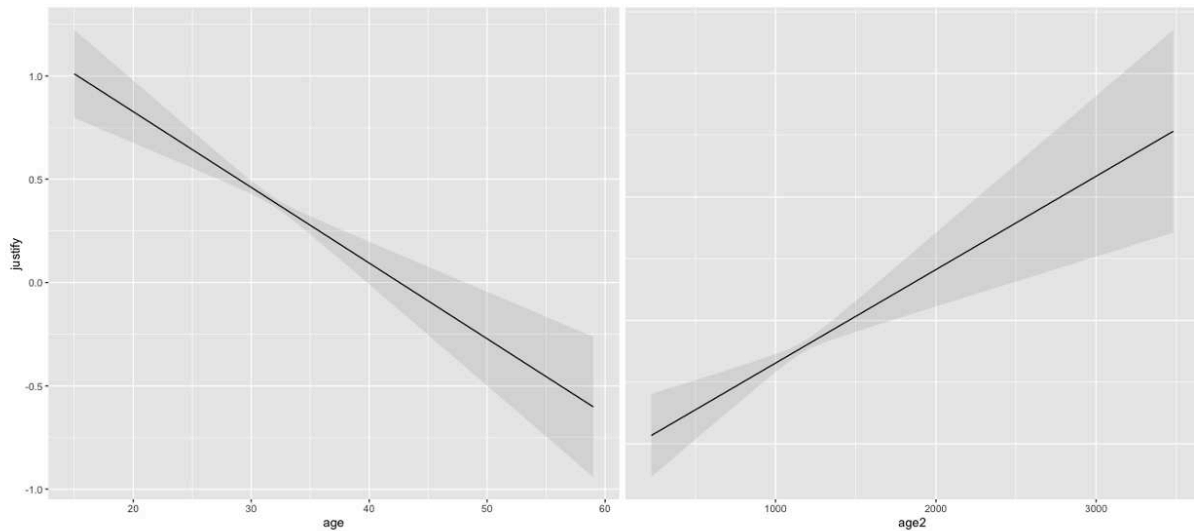


Figure 5. Plot Prediction Graph 2014



*Figure 6. Plot Prediction Graph 2022*

Based on figures 5 and 6, The linear regression plot predicts a positive relationship between age and the justification of intimate partner violence, as indicated by the downward sloping line. The curvilinear prediction plot suggests that the relationship between age and the five justification variables of IPV is non-linear. Initially, as age increases, the belief in the justification of IPV tends to decrease. However, beyond a certain point rationale for age corresponds to an increase in the justification of IPV, suggesting a U-like shape relationship. This might imply a diminishing increase rate to an increase in age up to a certain point, after which the justification of IPV increases again. The curve's shape is consistent in both years from model 2 of 2014 and 2022. (*Figures 5 and 6*)

*Tables 4 and 5 present logistic regression models for each justification of IPV in 2014 and 2022. Each model utilizes the exact specification as Model 2 in Table 2 and 3.*

Table 4. Logistic Regression 2014

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>				
	just_refsex Model (1)	just_out Model (2)	just_wifebf Model (3)	just_negchild Model (4)	just_wifearg Model (5)
Age	-0.046 (0.042)	-0.107** (0.037)	-0.187*** (0.056)	-0.073* (0.033)	-0.145*** (0.038)
age2	0.0005 (0.001)	0.001* (0.001)	0.002** (0.001)	0.001 (0.0005)	0.002** (0.001)
Wealth	-0.158 (0.089)	-0.212** (0.076)	-0.120 (0.116)	-0.183** (0.069)	-0.023 (0.077)
Residence	0.084 (0.198)	-0.160 (0.170)	0.247 (0.268)	-0.089 (0.155)	0.108 (0.178)
Central region	1.326** (0.410)	1.022** (0.334)	-0.008 (0.516)	0.895** (0.296)	1.415** (0.440)
Western region	0.920* (0.419)	1.114*** (0.324)	0.487 (0.450)	1.212*** (0.279)	1.561*** (0.428)
Greater Accra region	0.785 (0.469)	0.643 (0.381)	0.353 (0.532)	0.315 (0.347)	0.750 (0.493)
Volta region	-1.060 (0.671)	-0.545 (0.427)	-0.918 (0.605)	-0.392 (0.348)	0.417 (0.492)
Eastern region	0.843* (0.425)	0.746* (0.339)	0.408 (0.461)	0.805** (0.293)	1.708*** (0.428)
Ashanti region	0.301 (0.481)	0.362 (0.371)	0.280 (0.480)	-0.164 (0.353)	0.783 (0.472)
Brong Ahafo region	0.398 (0.419)	0.028 (0.345)	-0.899 (0.558)	-0.728* (0.351)	0.272 (0.472)
Northern region	1.989*** (0.348)	1.243*** (0.282)	0.377 (0.384)	0.947*** (0.251)	2.266*** (0.395)
Upper west region	1.636*** (0.370)	1.541*** (0.291)	1.445*** (0.362)	1.879*** (0.244)	2.300*** (0.399)
Gurma	0.427 (0.267)	0.679** (0.232)	0.851* (0.336)	0.798*** (0.217)	0.006 (0.269)
Mole Dagbani	-0.555* (0.226)	-0.469* (0.200)	-0.348 (0.287)	-0.323 (0.180)	-0.494* (0.214)

Catholic	0.233 (0.234)	0.281 (0.194)	0.306 (0.286)	0.548*** (0.166)	0.431* (0.198)
Islam	0.266 (0.205)	0.045 (0.182)	0.218 (0.264)	0.067 (0.167)	0.129 (0.194)
No religion	0.352 (0.266)	0.679** (0.211)	0.813** (0.314)	0.693*** (0.197)	0.868*** (0.216)
Traditional	0.526 (0.273)	0.493* (0.241)	0.835* (0.335)	0.695** (0.219)	0.333 (0.276)
Married	-0.640* (0.251)	-0.267 (0.219)	0.266 (0.346)	-0.354 (0.194)	-0.268 (0.229)
Partnered	-0.349 (0.344)	-0.051 (0.280)	-0.005 (0.493)	0.126 (0.238)	-0.176 (0.302)
Education level	-0.253* (0.100)	-0.238** (0.088)	0.004 (0.133)	-0.140 (0.080)	-0.121 (0.093)
Managers	0.219 (0.541)	0.277 (0.445)	-0.046 (0.745)	-0.146 (0.444)	-0.451 (0.533)
Professional	-0.632 (0.443)	-0.664 (0.383)	-0.568 (0.545)	-0.679* (0.311)	-1.203** (0.435)
Unemployed	-0.245 (0.236)	-0.422* (0.208)	-0.483 (0.286)	-0.608** (0.192)	-0.566** (0.211)
Length of relationship/marriage	-0.020 (0.086)	0.031 (0.075)	-0.063 (0.126)	-0.002 (0.068)	-0.023 (0.078)
Number of children	0.045 (0.035)	0.045 (0.029)	0.016 (0.050)	0.030 (0.028)	0.073* (0.030)
Constant	-2.065* (0.835)	-0.085 (0.716)	-0.660 (1.078)	-0.625 (0.651)	-1.249 (0.789)
Observations	4,336	4,336	4,336	4,336	4,336
Log Likelihood	-811.334	-1,033.727	-545.582	-1,199.323	-963.445
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,678.669	2,123.454	1,147.163	2,454.646	1,982.890

Note:

\* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01; \*\*\* p<0.001

Table 5. Logistic Regression 2022

*Dependent variable:*

	just_refsex Model (1)	just_out Model (2)	just_wifebf Model (3)	just_negchild Model (4)	just_wifearg Model (5)
Age	-0.123*** (0.032)	-0.071** (0.027)	-0.082 (0.051)	-0.090*** (0.025)	-0.091*** (0.025)
age2	0.001** (0.0005)	0.001 (0.0004)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001* (0.0004)	0.001* (0.0004)
Wealth	-0.138* (0.065)	-0.157** (0.053)	-0.318** (0.100)	-0.081 (0.047)	-0.133** (0.050)
Residence	0.201 (0.142)	0.016 (0.116)	-0.062 (0.211)	0.301** (0.105)	-0.009 (0.109)
Central region	-0.119 (0.332)	0.831** (0.276)	-0.560 (0.549)	0.556* (0.242)	0.250 (0.287)
Western region	-0.386 (0.369)	0.506 (0.298)	0.712 (0.410)	0.565* (0.246)	1.316*** (0.256)
Greater Accra region	-2.066** (0.750)	-1.043* (0.504)	-1.118 (0.787)	-1.258** (0.429)	-0.992* (0.442)
Volta region	-1.657** (0.620)	-1.028* (0.497)	-1.235 (0.770)	-0.704* (0.346)	-0.929* (0.436)
Eastern region	-0.985* (0.441)	0.435 (0.301)	-1.362 (0.772)	0.288 (0.257)	0.405 (0.285)
Ashanti region	-0.786* (0.373)	-0.145 (0.317)	-0.920 (0.581)	-0.166 (0.261)	-0.734* (0.349)
Western north region	-0.691 (0.370)	-0.023 (0.311)	-0.874 (0.576)	-0.619* (0.298)	-0.024 (0.296)
Ahafo region	-0.301 (0.316)	0.058 (0.294)	-0.088 (0.422)	-0.005 (0.251)	0.383 (0.266)
Bono region	0.031 (0.316)	0.416 (0.288)	0.249 (0.410)	0.540* (0.238)	0.357 (0.281)
Bono east region	-0.567 (0.316)	-0.498 (0.313)	-2.708** (1.039)	-0.735** (0.279)	0.041 (0.264)
Oti region	-0.591 (0.327)	0.353 (0.276)	-0.363 (0.464)	-0.263 (0.259)	-0.047 (0.279)
Northern region	0.268 (0.242)	0.944*** (0.227)	-0.217 (0.361)	0.906*** (0.200)	0.930*** (0.228)

Savannah region	0.955*** (0.230)	1.358*** (0.223)	0.338 (0.333)	0.851*** (0.202)	1.314*** (0.223)
North east region	0.096 (0.259)	0.459 (0.247)	-0.027 (0.358)	0.437* (0.217)	0.706** (0.240)
Upper west region	0.614* (0.242)	1.150*** (0.227)	0.560 (0.323)	1.136*** (0.200)	1.045*** (0.232)
Gurma	0.344 (0.205)	0.117 (0.176)	-0.041 (0.340)	0.138 (0.162)	0.106 (0.165)
Mole - Dagbani	0.348** (0.134)	0.365** (0.116)	0.447* (0.199)	0.299** (0.107)	0.106 (0.111)
Catholic	-0.124 (0.209)	0.226 (0.165)	-0.084 (0.294)	0.148 (0.145)	0.065 (0.157)
Islam	0.388** (0.143)	0.376** (0.122)	0.272 (0.213)	0.210 (0.111)	0.209 (0.115)
No religion	0.423 (0.236)	0.244 (0.208)	-0.062 (0.419)	0.314 (0.186)	0.354 (0.185)
Traditional/spiritual	0.254 (0.235)	0.385 (0.203)	0.507 (0.337)	0.308 (0.184)	0.086 (0.204)
Married	-0.103 (0.192)	-0.120 (0.158)	-0.235 (0.303)	-0.201 (0.145)	-0.488** (0.151)
Partnered	0.100 (0.295)	0.217 (0.222)	-0.132 (0.471)	0.048 (0.204)	-0.358 (0.223)
Educational level	-0.150* (0.069)	-0.184** (0.059)	-0.035 (0.110)	-0.126* (0.055)	-0.247*** (0.057)
Managers	-0.506 (0.605)	-1.061 (0.594)	-0.660 (1.021)	-0.685 (0.429)	-0.885 (0.519)
Professional	-0.784* (0.382)	-0.813** (0.303)	-1.951 (1.020)	-0.862** (0.266)	-1.107*** (0.336)
Unemployed	0.138 (0.165)	0.065 (0.146)	0.019 (0.225)	-0.004 (0.128)	-0.148 (0.135)
Length of relationship/marriage	0.012 (0.065)	0.117* (0.054)	-0.034 (0.118)	0.103* (0.051)	0.098 (0.052)
Number of children	0.032 (0.027)	0.003 (0.023)	0.050 (0.050)	0.019 (0.022)	0.045* (0.022)
Constant	-0.594	-1.078*	-0.948	-0.804	-0.110

	(0.614)	(0.528)	(0.933)	(0.473)	(0.499)
Observations	6,993	6,993	6,993	6,993	6,993
Log Likelihood	-1,395.543	-1,851.289	-717.172	-2,169.438	-2,012.940
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,859.087	3,770.578	1,502.343	4,406.875	4,093.880

*Note:*

\*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001

According to the first model in Table 4, age was not associated in 2014 with the justification of a wife refusing to have sex with her husband ( $p>.05$ ). However, age exhibited a curvilinear association with the justification of IPV in 2022 (table 5), where the initial age association is negative than positive. Age has a negative association with the justification when wife refuses to have sex with husband. Wealth was not associated in 2014 with the rationale for a wife refusing to have sex with her husband ( $p<.05$ ), whereas wealth exhibited a significant negative association with a wife refusing to have sex with her husband in 2022. Central region had a significant association with the justification of wife refusing to have sex with husband ( $p<.01$ ) in 2014; however, in 2022, the Central region was not associated with the justification of wife refusing to have sex with husband.

In Greater Accra, there was no association with the justification of a wife refusing to have sex with her husband in 2014, but Greater Accra was significantly negatively associated with the justification of a wife refusing to have sex with her husband ( $p<.01$ ) in 2022. Again, in the exact first model in 2014 the Eastern region had significant associated with the justification of wife refusing to have sex with husband ( $p<.05$ ) and significantly negative association with the justification of refusing to have sex with the husband in 2022. The Northern region was also associated considerably in 2014 with the justification of the wife refusing to have sex with her husband ( $p<.001$ ). However, there was no association with the justification of wife refusing to

have with husband in 2022. In the Upper West region, there was a significant association in both years 2014 and 2022 ( $p < .001$ ) and ( $p < .05$ ) with the justification of the wife refusing to have sex with the husband, respectively. Mole-Dagbani had a significant negative association in 2014 with the justification of wife refusing to have sex with her husband ( $p < .05$ ), and there was also considerable association in 2022 with the justification of wife refusing to have sex with husband ( $p < .01$ ). It was indicated that Islam exhibited significant association in 2022 with the justification of wife refusing to have sex with husband ( $p < .01$ ). Educational level according to the first model in both years, had a significant negative association with the justification of wife refusing to have sex with husband ( $p < .05$ ). This suggest that respondents who have lower educational level were likely to approve the justification of wife refusing to have sex with the husband compared to those who had to attain higher educational level. There was a significant negative association in 2022 with the justification of the wife refusing to have sex with no significant association with professional workers in 2014. Still, there was a significant negative association in 2022 with the justification of the wife refusing to have sex with her husband ( $p < .05$ ).

According to the second model, in both years, age had an association with the justification of the wife going out without telling the husband ( $p < .01$ ). Thus, age had a significant negative association with the justification of the wife going out without telling the husband, this indicates a curvilinear relationship with age and the justification of the wife going out with the husband in 2014. Wealth was associated with the justification associated with the wife going out without telling her husband ( $p < .01$ ) in both years. Wealth exhibited a negative association with the justification of wife-beating if the wife goes out without telling the husband. The central region had an association with the justification of wife going out without telling her husband ( $p < .01$ ) in both years. In Greater Accra, there was no association with the justification of a wife going out

without telling her husband in 2014. Still, there was no association with the justification of the wife going out without telling her husband in 2014, but there was an association in 2022 with the justification of the wife going out without telling her husband ( $p < .05$ ). There was association in the Eastern region in 2014 with the justification of wife going out without telling the husband ( $p < .05$ ) whereas in there was no association in the Eastern region in 2022 with the justification of wife going out without telling the husband. In the Northern region, there was association in both years with the justification of wife going out without telling the husband ( $p < .001$ ). Lastly, there was an association in the Upper West region in both years with the justification of the wife going out without telling the husband.

Religious denomination continues to manifest diversity in the justification of wife-beating, whereby there was no association with respondents who belong to no association with respondent belong to Islam in 2014 the justification of the wife going out and telling the husband. Still, there was a significant association in 2022 with the justification for the wife going out without telling the husband ( $p < .01$ ). There was also an association in 2014 among respondents who do not belong to any religious affiliation ( $p < .01$ ) with the justification of wife going out without telling husband but there was no association in 2022. Mole-Dagbani had a significant association with the rationale of the wife going out without telling her husband ( $p < .05$ ) in 2014 as well as ( $p < .01$ ) in 2022. Educational level according to the second model in both years, had a significant negative association with the justification of wife refusing to have sex with husband ( $p < .01$ ). There was a no significant association with professional workers in 2014 with the justification of wife going out without telling husband but there was a significant negative association in 2022 with the justification of wife going out without telling husband ( $p < .01$ ). There was no association in 2014 with the length of a relationship or marriage with the justification of wife going out without telling

the husband but there was a significant association with the length of relationship or marriage in 2022 with the justification of wife going out without telling the husband ( $p < .05$ ).

According to the third model in 2014, age was significantly associated with the justification of wife burning food ( $p < .001$ ). However, there was no association in 2022 with the justification of wife burning food. Therefore, there was no curvilinear association with age and the justification of wife burning food. Wealth was not associated in 2014 with the justification of wife burning food ( $p < .01$ ), whereas wealth exhibited a significant negative association with wife burning food in 2022. It was realized that there was no association in both years with the justification of wife burning food in the Central region. In the Upper West region there was association in both in 2014 with the justification of wife burning food ( $p < .001$ ), whereas there was no association in 2022. It was also realized that in 2014, there was association among respondents who do not belong to any religious group ( $p < .01$ ) with the justification of wife arguing with husband but there was no association in 2022.

According to the fourth model in 2014, age was significantly associated with the justification of a wife neglecting the child ( $p < .05$ ). Whereas there was a significant association in 2022 with the justification of a wife neglecting the child ( $p < .001$ ). Indicating a curvilinear relationship between the age and the justification of wife neglecting child in the later year. Wealth was significantly associated in 2014 with the justification of wife neglecting child ( $p < .01$ ) whereas there was no association with the justification of wife neglecting child in 2022. It was realized that in the Central region there was a significant association in 2014 with the justification of wife neglecting children ( $p < .01$ ) and there was also a significant association ( $p < .05$ ) with the justification of wife neglecting children. There was an association in both years in the Northern region ( $p < .001$ ) with the justification of wife neglecting child. It was also indicated that there was

a significant association in 2022 for respondents who belongs to the Mole-Dagbani ethnic group ( $p < .01$ ). Also, there was an association among individuals who do not have any religious affiliation in 2014 with the justification of wife neglecting child ( $p < .001$ ) whereby there was no association with the justification of wife neglecting child in 2022. In 2014, there was no association between educational level and the justification of wife neglecting child. Still, there was a significant negative association with the justification of wife neglecting child ( $p < .05$ ). This indicates that individuals with higher education had lower odds of approving wife beating if wife neglect children compared to those who had attain higher educational level. In 2014, there was an association among respondents who belong to the Catholic denomination ( $p < .001$ ) with the justification of the wife neglecting a child. However, there was no association in 2022 among respondents who belong to the Catholic church. There was an association in 2014 among respondents who do not belong to any religious affiliation ( $p < .001$ ) with the justification of wife neglecting child but there was no association in 2022. It was again realized that in both years, there was an association with individuals who had a professional occupation with the justification of wife neglecting child ( $p < .05$ ). It was also observed that length of relationship/marriage was associated with the justification of wife neglecting child ( $p < .05$ ) in 2022 whereby there was no association in 2014.

According to model 5, in both years, age was associated with the justification of the wife arguing with the husband ( $p < .001$ ), which indicates that age has a curvilinear relationship with the justification of the wife arguing with the husband. In 2014, wealth was not associated with the justification of the wife arguing with the husband. However, in 2022, wealth was with related to the justification of the more affluent when the wife arguing with the husband ( $p < .01$ ). Which indicates that people with more affluent wealth status had a higher odd of approval as compared

to those with the wealthiest wealth status. In 2014, there was an association among respondents who belong to the Catholic denomination ( $p < .05$ ) with the justification of an association among respondents who belong to the Catholic denomination ( $p < .05$ ) with the justification of the wife arguing with her husband. However, there was no association in 2022 among respondents who belong to the Catholic church. There was an association in 2014 among respondents who do not belong to any religious affiliation ( $p < .001$ ) with the justification of the wife arguing with her husband, but there was no association in 2022. In 2014, educational level, there was no association with the justification of the wife arguing with her husband; however, in 2022, the educational level had a significant negative association with the justification of the wife arguing with her husband ( $p < .001$ ) and indicating that higher attainment of education reduces the justification of a wife arguing with her husband as compared with those with lower or no education. It was realized that in 2014, marriage was not associated with the justification of a wife arguing with her husband, but in 2022, married had a significant negative association with the justification of a wife arguing with her husband ( $p < .01$ ). Respondents who have professional occupation in both years was significantly associated with the justification of wife arguing with husband ( $p < .05$ ). Also, in 2014 unemployment was related to the justification of wife arguing with husband ( $p < .01$ ). In both years, the number of children was associated with the justification of wife arguing with husband ( $p < .05$ ).

According to the first model in 2014 (table 4), age does not have any association on the justification for a wife refusing sex with her husband. There is no curvilinear association on the wife refusing to have sex with her husband. It is stated that men would justify wife beating due to the refusal of sex from the wife. It is hypothesized that refusal of sex would lead to the justification of wife beating. For this reason, we rejected the H2 in 2014. However, according to the first model in has an association with the justification of the wife refusing to have sex with Table 5, 2022, and

age has an association with the justification of the wife refusing to have sex with Table 5, 2022. Age has an association with the justification of the wife refusing to have sex with the husband. Therefore, there is a curvilinear association of the justification of refusal of sex, so this supports H2. Analyzing the non-linear relationship between a wife's refusal to engage in sexual activity with her husband from a sociological perspective provides a more profound comprehension of power dynamics, gender roles, and cultural influences (Ward Jr and Muldoon 2007; Pierotti 2013), thereby facilitating the promotion of healthy relationships. Refusal of sex can trigger power struggles, reflecting gendered dynamics and societal expectations of male dominance. Societal norms dictate expectations in relationships, challenging traditional gender roles, as well as cultural factors and norms, influence attitudes towards IPV. Socialization also significantly shapes beliefs and behaviors, reflecting changing norms around consent and gender equality (Pierotti 2013).

According to the second model in Table 4, 2014, there is an effect between age and the justification of the wife going out without telling the husband. Therefore, there is a curvilinear association with the wife going out without telling the husband, which supports H3. However, in Table 5, 2022, there is no curvilinear association on the justification of the wife going out without telling the husband. Therefore, we reject H3 in 2022. The gender inequalities, power structure of marriage, and cultural norms of a society contribute to the curvilinear association of the wife going out telling her husband (Anderson 2007; Straus and Coleman 2017). The sociological significance of IPV when one goes out without telling the husband lies in the power dynamics, gender roles, and control within relationships (Ward Jr and Muldoon 2007; Pierotti 2013). This justification challenges traditional gender norms and autonomy expectations for women. The husband's reaction may reflect a sense of entitlement and control over his wife's actions, rooted in patriarchal

structures. Violence in response to the wife's independence enforces gender roles and dominance, illustrating coercive control (Ward Jr and Muldoon 2007).

According to model 3 in 2014, there is an association between age and the justification of wife burning food. Therefore, there is a curvilinear association and the approval of the wife beating if the wife burns food, which supports H3. However, according to model 4, in 2022, there was no association between age and the justification of wife burning food. Therefore, there is no curvilinear association on the approval of consequently wife-beating if the wife burns food. Therefore, we reject wife-beating if the wife burns food. Therefore, we rejected H3 in 2022.

According to the fourth model in Table 4, 2014; there is no association between age and the justification for the wife neglecting a child. Therefore, there is no curvilinear association on the rationale for the wife neglecting the child, so we reject the H3. However, in model 4 in Table 5, 2022, there is an effect on age and the justification of the wife neglecting a child. Therefore, we support H5.

According to model 5 in both Tables 4 and 5, thus 2014 and 2022, there is an effect on age and the justification of a wife arguing with her husband. Therefore, there is a curvilinear effect on the rationale for the wife arguing with the husband, so we support H6.

Research findings indicate that the propensity to justify IPV or the acceptance and rationalization of violence within intimate relationships, is not exclusively determined by age (Owusu Adjah and Agbmafle 2016; Doku and Asante 2015; Dickson et al. 2020). Instead, it manifests no curvilinear relationship with age, implying the inclusion of multifaceted factors. Some studies have revealed that younger individuals exhibit higher levels of IPV justification, potentially attributable to limited relationship experience, lower levels of maturity, and heightened susceptibility to societal norms that endorse violence (Dickson et al. 2020). Conversely, as

individuals advance in age, their inclination to justify IPV tends to decline. Moreover, as individuals enter adulthood, they may possess a stronger sense of self and personal values that reject violence in any manifestation (Abdulkader et al. 2019). However, as indicated in the results of this study, a substantial proportion of individuals, as they get older, endorse the justification of violence within an intimate relationship; this suggests that there is a curvilinear relationship between age and the justification of IPV.

*The figures below show the (Plot predictions graphs 2014 and 2022 respectively) association between age and each of the justification variables.*

Justification for refusal to have sex with husband: When estimating the justification for the refusal of sex with husband, it is essential to consider the autonomy and agency of both partners in the relationship. The results indicate that at a younger age, individuals exhibited higher levels of approving wife beating if the wife refuses to have sex with the husband. However, older individuals tend to exhibit lower levels for the justification of a wife refusing to have sex with her husband. Moreover, older individuals at some point tend to approve the justification of a wife refusing to have sex with her husband, indicating a curvilinear relationship with age.

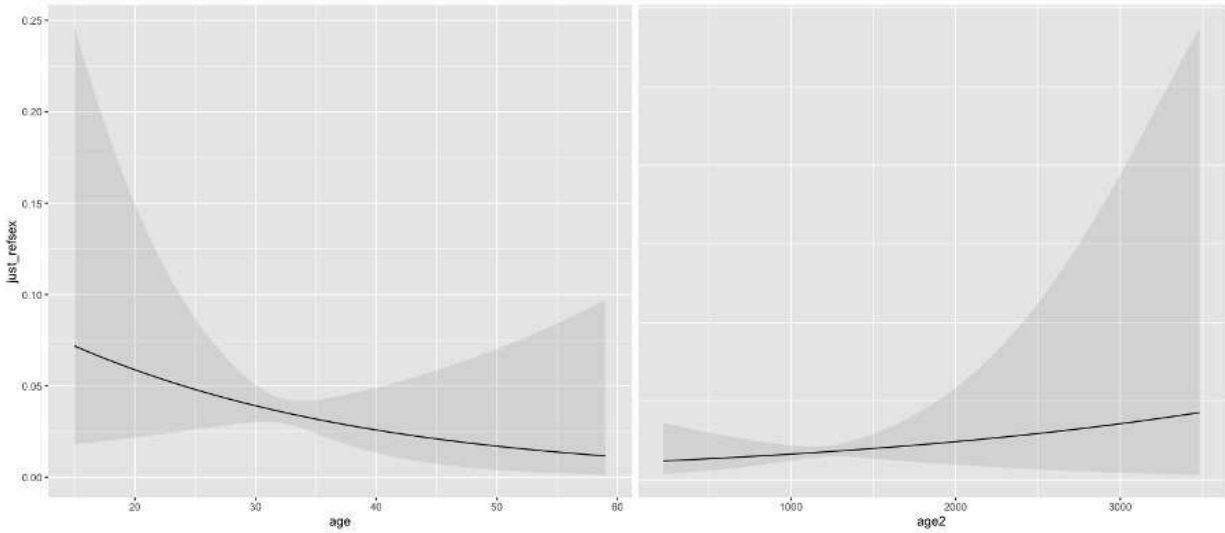
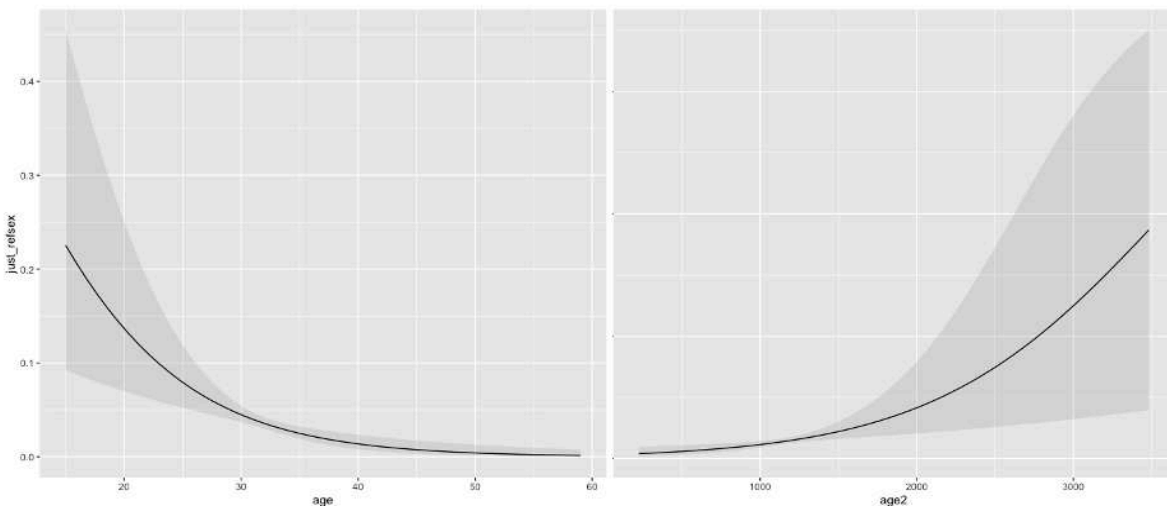


Figure 7. Plot Prediction Graph 2014

The figure above shows the relationship between age and the justification of a wife refusing to have sex with her husband in 2014. At a younger age, the belief of the justification for the wife refusing to have sex with the husband is higher, but it decreases within the life course of the individual as respondents get older. At some stage in the life of respondents, the belief of the justification for a wife refusing to have sex with her husband begins to rise again. This indicates that there is a curvilinear relationship between age and the justification of wife refusing to have sex with her husband.



*Figure 8. Plot Prediction Graph 2022*

The figure above shows the relationship between age and the justification of a wife refusing to have sex with her husband in 2022. At a younger age, within the life-course the belief of the justification for the wife refusing to have sex with the husband is higher. Still, it decreases within the individual's life course as respondents get older. At some stage in the life of respondents, the belief of the justification for a wife refusing to have sex with her husband, begins to rise again but this time at a faster rate than in 2014, which indicates that there is a curvilinear relationship with the justification of wife refusing to have sex with husband and age.

Justification for going out without telling the husband: The decision to go out without telling the husband can be attributed to factors such as engaging in personal activities outside of the marital or intimate relationship. However, as shown in the results, younger respondents tend to have higher levels of approving the justification of the wife going out without telling her husband, but older individuals tend to exhibit lower levels for the justification of the wife going out without telling her husband. However, older individuals at some point tend to have higher levels for the justification of the wife going out without telling the husband; this, therefore,

indicates that age has a curvilinear association with the likelihood for justification of the wife going out without telling the husband.

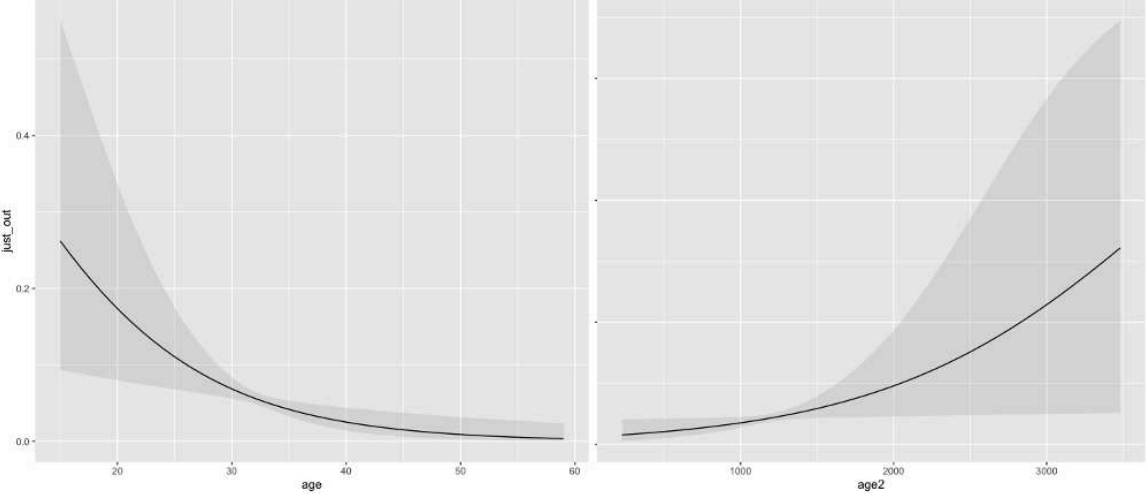


Figure 9. Plot Prediction Graph 2014

This graph shows the relationship between age and the justification of a wife going out without telling her husband in 2014. There is a higher belief in the justification of the wife going out without telling the husband, but the belief turns to turns to decrease in the life of the individual. However, at some point in the life of the respondent, the justification of the wife going out without telling her husband increases again, which indicates that there is a curvilinear relationship between the justification of the wife going out without telling the husband and age.

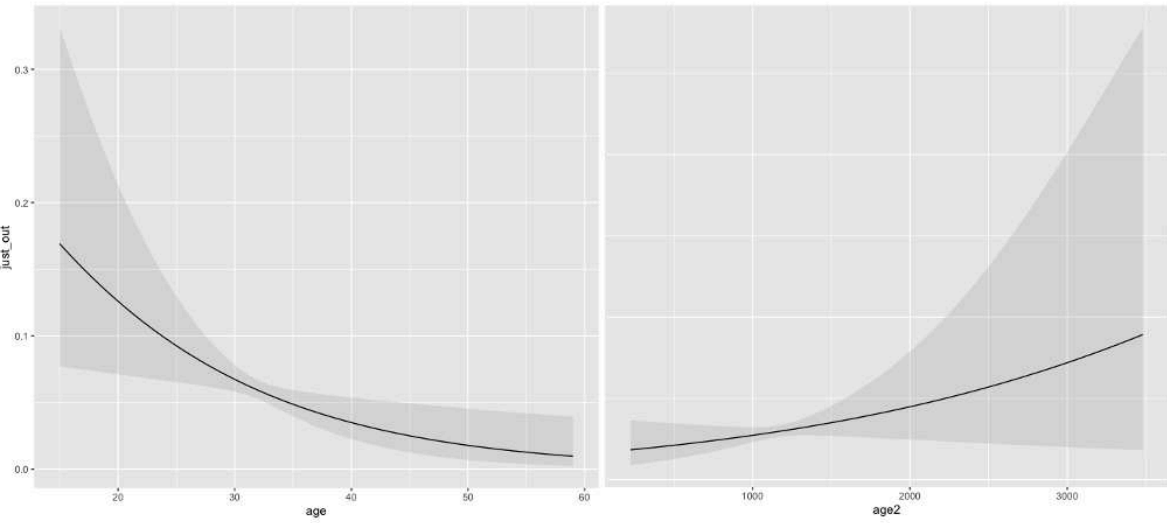


Figure 10. Plot Prediction Graph 2022

This graph shows the relationship between age and the justification of wife going out without telling husband in 2022. There is a higher belief in the justification of the wife going out without telling the husband, but the belief turns to decrease in the life of the individual. However, at some point in the respondent's life, the justification of wife going out without telling husband increases again, which indicates a curvilinear relationship with the rationale of the wife going out without telling the husband and age.

Justification for burning food: Instances of burning food can occur due to various reasons, such as distractions, lack of experience in cooking, or unforeseen circumstances. However, there was no association between age and the justification for the wife burning food. Age has no curvilinear association with the likelihood of the justification of the wife burning food. As individuals age, they may develop more experience and skills in cooking, reducing the likelihood of burning food.

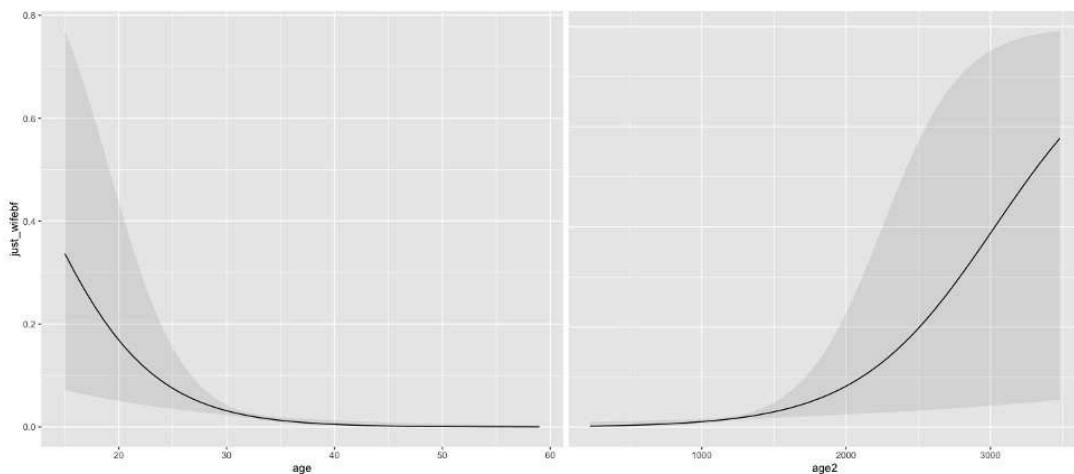
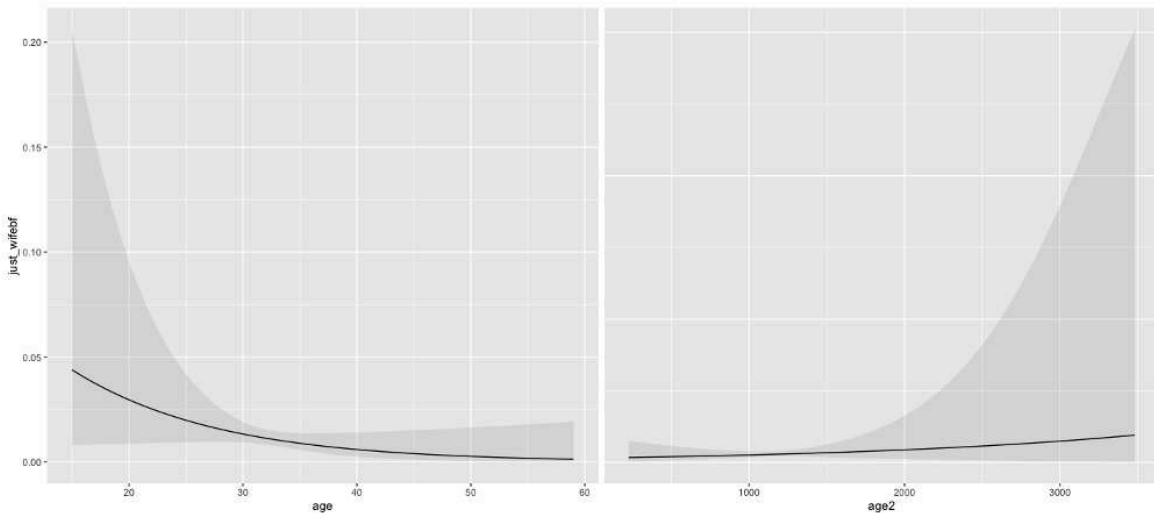


Figure 11. Plot Prediction Graph 2014

This graph also shows that in 2014 there were some believed that age is a determinant, with the justification of the wife burning food, but the belief of justification turned down at a very early

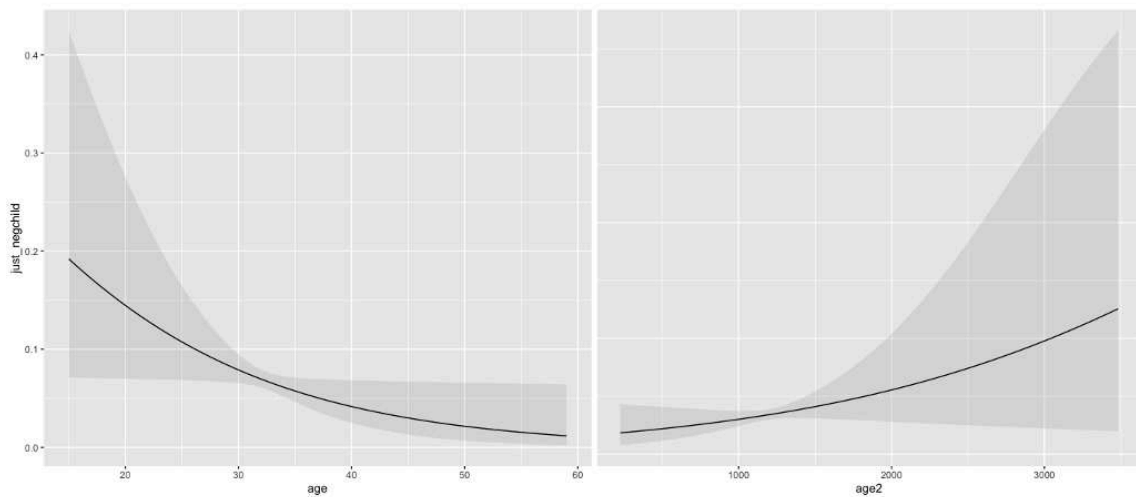
stage in the life of the respondent, about 30 years till 59 but the believe of the justification of wife burning food beings to raise again after age 60+ but at a faster rate. This also indicates a curvilinear relationship between age and the justification of wife burning food.



*Figure 12. Plot Prediction Graph 2022*

This graph also shows that, the respondents believe that age is a determinant with the justification of wife burning food, but the belief of justification turns to go down at a very early stage in the respondent's life about 30 years in 2022. The belief for the justification of the wife burning food remains steady, as depicted in the graph, suggesting that there is no curvilinear relationship between age and the justification of the wife burning food. This can improve some of the policies advocated in the past ten years.

Justification for neglecting a child: Neglecting a child can arise from various challenges, such as overwhelming responsibilities, personal difficulties, or lack of support. Age has a curvilinear association with the likelihood of the justification of wife neglecting the child, as indicated in the result. As individuals age, they may acquire more life experience and parenting skills, which can reduce the likelihood of neglecting their child, but also, as individuals age, the justification for a wife neglecting a child tends to have higher odds again at some point.

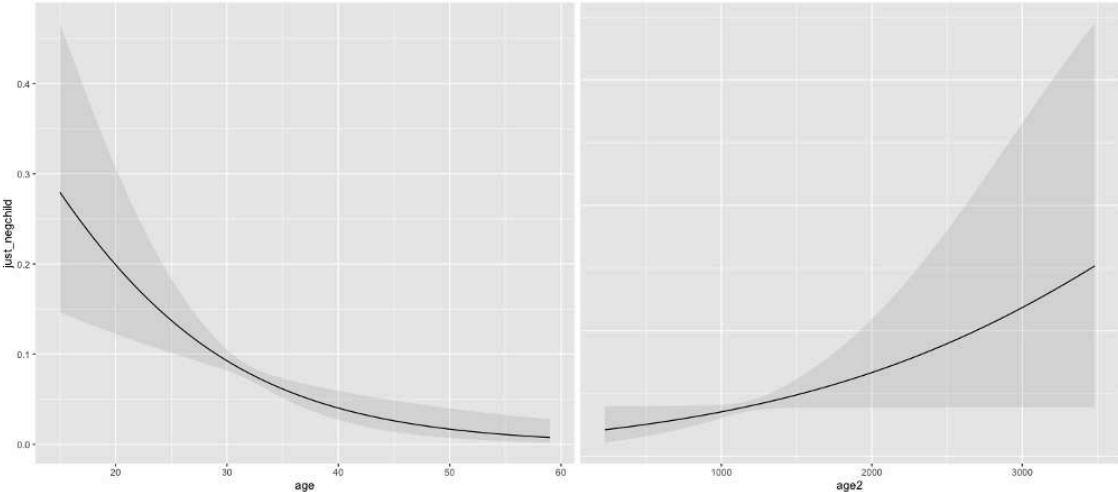


*Figure 13. Plot Prediction Graph 2014*

In this graph, it shows that respondents believe in the justification of wife-beating when wife neglects the child. The belief is firm at a younger age but begins to drop at age 30. The belief in the justification of the wife neglecting the child begins to go up again as the respondents get

older after 60 years. Suggesting that there is a curvilinear relationship between age and the approval of wife-beating if the wife neglects wife-beating if the wife neglected the child in 2014.

Figure 14. Plot Prediction Graph 2022



There was also a strong belief in the approval of the wife-beating if the wife neglects the child in 2022, which drops at around age 30 and then rises again after some years, indicating a curvilinear relationship between age and the justification of the wife neglecting children.

Justification for arguing with husband: Arguments within a relationship are natural and can stem from differences in opinions, stress, or the need for resolving conflicts. Age has a curvilinear association with the likelihood of the justification of arguing with the husband. younger individuals have higher levels of believing in the justification of arguing with husbands. Still, as individuals age, they may develop better emotional regulation skills and experience, leading to potentially lower levels for the justification of arguing husband. Still, at some point in the life course, the belief for the justification of arguing with the husband tends to increase.

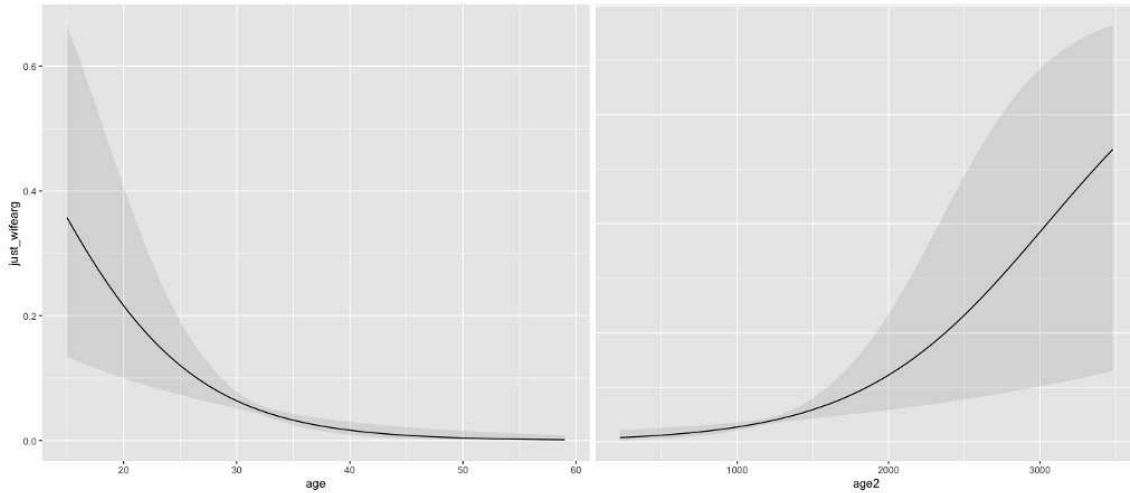
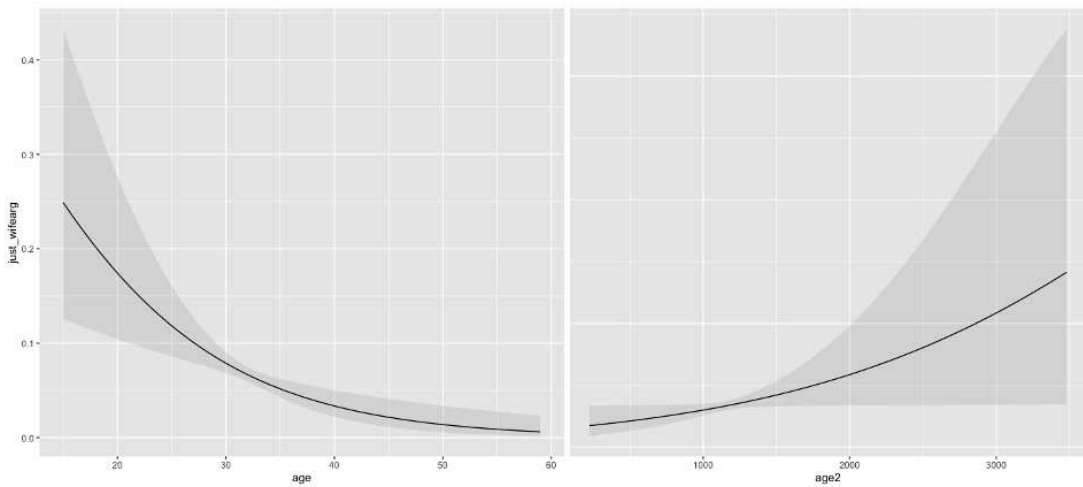


Figure 15. Plot Prediction Graph 2014

In 2014, there was such a strong belief in the approval of a wife-beating needed to be stronger belief in the approval of a wife-beating if she argues with the husband. Therefore, the belief of the approval of wife-beating if the wife argues with the husband begins to drop at around age 20, but then their belief increases again at some stage in the life of the respondent; this indicates that there is a curvilinear relationship between the age and the justification of wife arguing with the husband.



*Figure 16. Plot Prediction Graph 2022*

In 2022, there was no stronger believe in the approval of wife beating if argues with the husband. Therefore, the belief of the approval of wife-beating if the wife argues with the husband begins to drop at around age 20 but then the believe increases again at some stage in the life of the respondent but not at a faster rate in 2014; this indicates that there is a curvilinear relationship between the age and the justification of wife arguing with the husband.

## CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

Intimate partner violence is widespread among intimate partners in Ghana (Chirwa et al. 2018; Dickson et al. 2020). This study examines men's justification or approval of intimate partner violence in Ghana. Due to the high rate at which domestic violence or intimate partner violence is of high prevalence in Ghana, as reported by (Campbell 2016; Knott 2019). Prior studies indicate that endorsing or exhibiting leniency toward violence has a constructive influence on its continuation (Chirwa et al. 2018). However, documentation is scarce regarding the perception of Ghanaian men on their justification of intimate partner violence in Ghana. Mainly, men in Ghana have various ways of justifying intimate partner violence in terms of age, wealth status, and educational level. However, there were inconsistencies in some of the instances that men justify intimate partner violence, for example, religion and occupation.

This study result showed that there is a curvilinear relationship between age and the justification of intimate partner violence in Ghana. The study revealed that between 2014 and 2022 data used for this study, there is approval of wife-beating at a young age at a diminishing rate, but at some point, in the age of men, the approval of wife-beating start to go up again at the age of 45 years (*figure 1 and 2*) (Yount, Roof, and Naved 2018). This could explain cultural beliefs (Stickley, Kislitsyna, Timofeeva, and Vågerö 2008; Ajayi and Soyinka-Airewele 2018). This also confirms the theory of life course perspective of intimate partner violence with age (Knight, Menard, Simmons, Bouffard, and Orsi 2016). Therefore, older men may have their view contrary to why they believe in the justification of intimate partner violence at an older age and why younger men's approval of justification of intimate partner violence decline, which could be because of experience of intimate partner violence at some point in their life. While the study revealed a lower odds of

young men approving wife beating (Stickley et al. 2008), the results is also consistent with older men (45years +) approving wife beating. These results also aggress with the hypotheses stated that age has a significant association with the likelihood of male justification of IPV and then age has an association with the likelihood of male justifying each of the justification variables of IPV.

In addition to how IPV had changed in the 2014 and 2022 data, there has been an increase in all the justification of IPV except the justification of IPV when wife burns food. Therefore, increase in the 2022 data in relation to the justification of IPV in Ghana may be the occurrence of the recent coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic because the 2022 data was collected in 2021. According to Moreira and Pinto da Costa (2020) asserted that the Covid-19 pandemic intensified the existing risk factors for IPV by increasing stress, isolation, and economic dependence within relationships. The stress and lack of control caused by the pandemic can worsen psychopathological issues related IPV, leading to instances of violence. Social distancing measures can foster social isolation, providing perpetrators with opportunities to exert control and manipulative victims (Moreira and Pinto da Costa 2020). This can be one of the specific reasons for the turning points that occur throughout the life trajectories of men in Ghana which can increase the justification of IPV in Ghana. Moreover, challenges like fear of the virus, disruptions in daily routines, extended time spent with partners, and financial difficulties can escalate relationship stress, potentially triggering IPV incidents (Moreira and Pinto da Costa 2020; Kaukinen 2020).

Beyond the hypotheses, we found that men's odds of approving intimate partner violence in terms of wealth, revealing that the richest wealth status is associated with lower odds of approving intimate partner violence. This indicates that a significant proportion of people who are not in the richest wealth status approve of wife beating; this could be because of the dependence on their intimate partners because when someone depends on someone, the possibility of

approving intimate partner violence is higher (Dhungel, Dhungel, Dhital, and Stock 2017; Terrell, and Bailey 2021; Adu 2023). Lower wealth status is associated with higher intimate partner violence (Larsen, Aye, and Bjertness 2021). Also, poor men can be frustrated by not being able to provide for their intimate partners or children, which can result in the approval of intimate partner violence when there is a little misunderstanding (Barker, Aguayo, and Correa 2013). In addition, people with limited financial resources may consider turning to domestic violence to relieve the psychological distress caused by their impoverished socioeconomic status. This answers the research question about the effect of wealth on the justification of intimate partner violence. Moreover, other studies in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) also revealed a similar observation, noticing that wealth has an association between financial reliance and intimate partner violence (Dickson et al. 2020; Darteh et al. 2021). It varies across low- and middle-income countries (Kebede, Van Harmelen, and Roman-Urrestarazu 2022). The justification of IPV among men is notably influenced by the dependence of women financially. Studies have shown that men with lower wealth status are more inclined to justify physical IPV in comparison to those with higher wealth status (Durevall and Lindakog 2015; Taylor, Xia, Do KA 2017; Darteh et al. 2021). This association implies that socioeconomic elements contribute to the formation of attitude towards IPV, with individuals of lower socioeconomic status demonstrating a greater tendency to justify IPV (Waltermaurer 2013; Abeya 2015; Darteh 2021) which can be another specific transition in the life course of men in believing in the justification of IPV in Ghana.

Education also plays a significant role in intimate partner violence, and it has the odds of justifying wife beating. Consistent with Dickson et al. (2020) and Darteh et al. (2021), men with lower or no formal education were discovered to have higher odds, and men with lower or no formal education were found to have a higher odd of justifying intimate partner violence as

compared to those with higher/tertiary education. This suggests that the higher men attain a higher level of education, and the likelihood of justifying intimate partner violence reduces or becomes unacceptable. Thus, the husband's education lowers the probability of approving wife-beating (Dickson et al. 2020; Darteh et al. 2021; Özer, Fidrmuc, and Eryurt 2023). Additionally, this means that the perpetration and the justification of intimate partner violence can decrease when there is a higher increase in formal education. Studies in Ghana also reveal those women with no formal education support wife-beating (Doku and Asante 2015; Dickson et al. 2020) therefore, this indicate reveal those women with no formal education support wife-beating (Dickson et al. 2020); thus, this indicates that education is very important critical to help curb this problem.

Consistent with Dirwa et al. (2018), the study found that men from the Central region in 2014 approved wife beating compared to 2022. However, men from regions like the Northern and the Upper West approve of the beating wife-beating across both 2014 and 2022 as compared to other regions other areas. This finding is also consistent with Tenkorang et al. (2013), who showed that violence among women in these two regions is prevalent as compared to other regions like Greater Accra.

The justification variables also confirm that men in Ghana may be using Sykes and Matza's neutralization techniques to justify why they are perpetrating their actions. Men in Ghana justify wife beating through five main ways: if the wife goes out without telling them when the wife refuses to have sex with them, when the wife neglects the children when the wife burns food, and when the wife argues with them. Even though there are five neutralization techniques by Sykes and Matza, male perpetrators of intimate partner violence or domestic violence in Ghana justify their actions through the above justification items. Therefore, the extent to which male offenders of IPV in Ghana, use techniques of neutralization is by these justifications that the wife did one or

more of the above justifications or any of the justifications, and that is why they also beat them. Additionally, acceptance for neutralizations of justifying violence contributes to violent behavior (Agnew 1994). This study contributes to significant evidence of justification of IPV using neutralization techniques, which is very common among male offenders in Ghana.

The findings of this study support the life course approach to techniques of neutralization theory whereby perpetrators of IPV justify their deviant behavior. Throughout the life trajectories of individuals, the justification of IPV can differ depending various factors such as age, cultural norms life experiences, and societal influence (Tenkorang and Owusu 2018). Younger individuals may be inclined to justify IPV more due to reasons such as immaturity, exposure to media violence, or distorted views of relationships. With increasing age and life experience, individuals tend to become less accepting of IPV, acknowledging its harmful impacts and repercussions. (Tenkorang and Owusu 2018). However, societal shifts, changing norms, and personal experiences can lead individuals to reassess their perspectives on IPV and move towards justifying such violence against intimate partners. moreover, this study provides a new insight into the understanding of the issues of IPV and for the first time in a Ghanaian context the justifications of IPV has been explained with the techniques of neutralization. The study identified that at least male perpetrators of IPV in Ghana justify wife beating by apply one of the techniques of neutralization or more which is rooted in the Ghanaian cultural norms, socialization, and throughout their life experiences.

Neutralization techniques theories, as it has been discussed in this study that Ghanaian men used as a motivation to justify or deny their violent or deviant behaviors against their intimate partners; by employing this theory in this study has contributed to an insight and, more profound understanding into the justifications and rationalizations perpetrators (Ghanaian men) employ to

minimize taking responsibility for their violent behaviors. Additionally, this study has shed light on, and understanding that neutralization techniques would be able to inform intervention and prevention efforts by addressing these justifications used by perpetrators and help in the minimization of IPV.

### **Strengths and Limitations**

This study was based on the 2014 and 2022 GDHS; hence, the findings fairly reflect the current status quo of men in terms of justifying intimate partner violence or domestic violence in Ghana. Additionally, the huge sample size enables the extrapolating of the findings to the entire male population of Ghana. Additionally, other studies investigate both women's and men's approval of domestic violence or intimate partner violence; this is the first study of its kind investigating solely men's justification of intimate partner violence in Ghana using Sykes and Matza's neutralization techniques. Furthermore, this study also uses two GDHS datasets to understand men's justification of intimate partner violence. Even though there have been some significant findings, that some limitations must be recognized. The GDHS did not record men's experience of intimate partner violence but only women, which made it very difficult to draw causal relationships between age and experience. Additionally, since this is a quantitative study, the techniques of neutralization cannot be fully explained therefore, a qualitative study is needed in the future for this type of study to be able to identify the techniques of neutralization among perpetrators of IPV in Ghana. Also, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the key factors that impacted families and has been multifaceted and profound causing an increase in the occurrence of intimate partner violence (IPV) in recent times after the outbreak. Therefore, future study on the justification of IPV should make the effort to look at how the pandemic impacted the surge in IPV justification among men. Feminist criminology should also be highly improved in future studies to help in understanding

the intersectionality of IPV. Feminist criminology explores the connections between the study of intimate partner violence (IPV) and the examination of gendered dynamics and social structures that contribute to violence against women. Looking at the oppression, inequality, and power imbalance in the society among women in relation to the justifications or the approval of intimate partner violence.

### **Policy Implications**

Some policy implications can be drawn from this study. Policymakers should prioritize the reporting of domestic violence among both women and men and then the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit of the Ghana police services should incorporate inviting both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence when it is reported and the techniques of neutralization in their reporting data. The DOVVSU of the Ghana Police Service is tasked with safeguarding the rights of vulnerable individuals by preventing and addressing various forms of abuse, including physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, socio-economic, and harmful cultural practices. They also establish a reliable database for crime detection, prevention, and prosecution; treat victims/complainants and their families with respect and courtesy professionally, take statements in a professional manner, and provide victims with information about their rights. Therefore, when the neutralization techniques are incorporated, they can get data on why the perpetrators committed that violence.

As it stands now, DOVVSU does not have any report on perpetrators and why they sanctioned that violent behavior. This intervention strategy should be motivated in the regions where the approval of IPV is prevalent. Furthermore, formal education should be encouraged in these regions to help reduce intimate partner violence since it is evident that higher formal education reduces the approval of IPV. Additionally, housing relocation should be implemented

for victims or perpetrators of IPV when identified or when victims report abuse from their partners, which would help reduce the perpetration of IPV. System and solution individual-level policy solutions should be considered to adequately tackle structural disadvantages (Steele, Sutton, Brown, Simons, and Warren 2022). Another policy recommendation is that the representation of more females be encouraged females in the police force, especially in the DOVVSU of the Ghana Police Service (GPS), should be encouraged, as well as the mandatory arrest of perpetrators. Introducing a mandatory arrest will deter perpetrators from justifying their actions and reduce the justification of IPV even though there are cultural factors. This will also help the official in charge of the DOVVSU of the Ghana Police Service to understand why there is a curvilinear relationship between age and the justification of IPV. Thus, this will lead to an investigation as to why at a certain age, men begin to believe in the justification of wife-beating after there has been a disbelieve from a particular age.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, age, education, and wealth, ethnicity, religion, region, occupation, and the number of children has shown to have a significant effect on the justification of intimate partner violence among Ghana men in both 2014 and 2022. Therefore, social actors and the government of Ghana should consider developing and implementing policies that would target these areas to help curb the justification of welfare, specifically targeting areas where it is prevalent, like the upper west, northern, and upper east regions. The fact that intimate partner violence is a private matter, the rate at which they are being reported should also be of concern to the government and the bodies where they are reported to encourage self-reporting in communities with a higher prevalence of wife beating and user-friendly services and support for victims. Additionally, perpetrators should also be punished to serve as a deterrent to those who approve of wife beating.

A targeted approach to economic empowerment initiatives, with a focus on uplifting men in economically disadvantaged categories, can contribute significantly to dismantling the structural factors that contribute to the justification of wife beating in Ghana. This shift can lay the groundwork for fostering healthier and more equitable relationships/marriages.

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## Appendix

### Descriptive of results

Table 6. Summary Statistics 2014

<b>Variables</b>	<b>mean</b>	<b>sd</b>	<b>min</b>	<b>max</b>
Wife beating if wife refuses to have sex with husband	0.06		0.00	1.00
Wife beating if wife goes out without telling husband	0.08		0.00	1.00
Wife beating if wife neglect the children	0.10		0.00	1.00
Wife beating if wife argues with husband	0.07		0.00	1.00
Wife beating if wife burns food	0.03		0.00	1.00
Age	32.33	12.44	15.00	59.00
Catholic	0.14		0.00	1.00
Islam	0.21		0.00	1.00
Traditional/spiritual	0.06		0.00	1.00
No religion	0.06		0.00	1.00
wealth	2.82	1.45	1.00	5.00
Akan	0.40		0.00	1.00
ewe	0.12		0.00	1.00
Mole-Dagbani	0.24		0.00	1.00
Gurma	0.07		0.00	1.00
Urban	0.47		1.00	1.00
Rural	0.53		1.00	1.00
Western region	0.12		0.00	1.00

Central region	0.09		0.00	1.00
Greater Accra region	0.11		0.00	1.00
Volta region	0.08		0.00	1.00
Eastern region	0.10		0.00	1.00
Ashanti region	0.10		0.00	1.00
Brong Ahafo region	0.11		0.00	1.00
Northern region	0.11		0.00	1.00
Upper east region	0.10		0.00	1.00
Upper west region	0.08		0.00	1.00
Length of relationship/marriage	2.03	2.25	0.00	7.00
Number of children	2.47	3.24	0.00	30.00
Educational level	1.64	0.86	0.00	3.00
Unemployed	0.14		0.00	1.00
Managers	0.03		0.00	1.00
Professional	0.09		0.00	1.00
Skilled worker	0.18		0.00	1.00
Unskilled worker	0.17		0.00	1.00
Agriculture	0.39		0.00	1.00
Other occupation	0.00		0.00	1.00
Married	0.45		0.00	1.00
Partnered	0.08		0.00	1.00
Justify	0.33	0.94	0.00	5.00

Table 7. Summary Statistics 2022

<b>Variables</b>	<b>mean</b>	<b>sd</b>	<b>min</b>	<b>max</b>
Wife beating if wife refuses to have sex with husband	0.06		0	1
Wife beating if wife goes out without telling husband	0.09		0	1
Wife beating if wife neglect the children	0.11		0	1
Wife beating if wife argues with husband	0.10		0	1
Wife beating if wife burns food	0.03		0	1
Age	31.93	12.13	15	59
Catholic	0.11		0	1
Islam	0.28		0	1
No religion	0.05		0	1
Traditional/spiritual	0.05		0	1
Akan	0.34		0	1
Ewe	0.11		0	1
Mole-dagbani	0.25		0	1
Gurma	0.10		0	1
Urban	0.46	0.50	1	1
Rural	0.54	0.50	1	1
Western region	0.05		0	1
Central region	0.06		0	1

Greater Accra region	0.07		0	1
Volta region	0.05		0	1
Eastern region	0.06		0	1
Ashanti region	0.07		0	1
Western north region	0.06		0	1
Ahafo region	0.06		0	1
Bono region	0.05		0	1
Bono east region	0.07		0	1
Oti region	0.07		0	1
Northern region	0.08		0	1
Savannah region	0.08		0	1
North east region	0.06		0	1
upper east region	0.07		0	1
upper west region	0.06		0	1
Length of relationship/marriage	1.89	2.16	0	7
Number of children	2.30	3.07	0	25
Educational level	1.67	0.91	0	3
Wealth	2.74	1.41	1	5
Unemployed	0.12		0	1
Managers	0.03		0	1
Professional	0.08		0	1
Skilled worker	0.23		0	1
Unskilled worker	0.12		0	1

Agriculture	0.41		0	1
No classification	0.01		0	1
Married	0.46		0	1
Partnered	0.06		0	1
Justify	0.39	0.94	0	5