



Bride Price Payment and Domestic Violence-Perspectives of Husbands in the Cape Coast Metropolis, Ghana

Monica Ofosu-Koranteng¹
Kwesi Addei Mensah²

¹mofosu-koranteng@ucc.edu.gh (+233249533518)

²kwesi.addei@wiuc-ghana.edu.gh (+2332442275)

¹University of Cape Coast, Ghana

²Wisconsin International University College, Accra, Ghana

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between bride price payment and domestic violence from the perspective of husbands. The study focused on auto mechanics operating in the Siwdu light industrial area in the Cape Coast Metropolis in Ghana. The study was grounded in the patriarchy theory and adopted a descriptive research design. Using the Yamane formula for sample size determination, 69 respondents were sampled as study participants from a target population of 173. Data collection procedures involved the use of a questionnaire, after which data gathered was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. Some of the major findings are as follows: the majority of respondents believed that the payment of the bride price first gives men a certain degree of power, which places them in a domineering and controlling capacity over their spouses; most respondents believed that the power allotted to men as a result of the payment of bride price and patriarchy is often applied negatively by men and this leads to domestic violence. The study concluded by emphasising the critical necessity for interventions focused on dismantling ingrained gender norms and fostering fair relationships within the household. These could be done through educational campaigns and the provision of counselling and other support services for both the abused and the abuser.

Key Words: Bride Price, Domestic Violence, Husbands, Spouses

I. INTRODUCTION

The payment of bride price, a historically significant aspect of African marriage transactions, is the focus of this study. Ngutor et al. (2013) highlight that bride price payment is a prevalent and cherished cultural practice in over 90% of Sub-Saharan African countries. This practice typically involves the presentation of either an agreed sum of money or traditional items such as cloth, livestock and cash crops or a combination of money and conventional items by the prospective groom and his family to the prospective bride and her family (Adjei, 2016). Thiara and Hague (2011) underline that bride price payment is a widely accepted cultural practice which legitimises customary marriages in Africa.

However, in recent times, this cultural practice has undergone significant changes due to modernisation and westernisation. The introduction of non-traditional items such as electronic appliances, parcels of land, furniture, and cars alongside traditional items has sparked a wave of interest in the evolution of the practice (Asiimwe, 2013). At this point, it is important to differentiate between bride price and dowry payment. Unlike the bride price, where the prospective groom and his family present the agreed items to the prospective bride's family, the custom of dowry payment refers to the payment made by the prospective bride to the groom or his family (Mangena & Ndlovu, 2013). However, dowry payment is mainly practised among South Asian cultures (Mangena & Ndlovu, 2013).

The payment of bride price is central in most marriages in the African culture, serving as a crucial component of the marriage transaction process for several reasons. Firstly, it is a financial transaction and a cultural validation of a customary marriage (Thiara & Hague, 2011). In countries such as Ghana, the prospective groom and his family are expected to pay the bride price to the prospective bride and her family to conclude the customary marriage process before the couple can proceed to have a church or court wedding if they wish.

This underscores the cultural significance and societal acceptance of the bride price payment. The payment of bride price is of great importance in the African culture such that among the Fantes of Ghana, if a man cohabited with a woman in an intimate relationship as a household unit without paying the bride price and the woman dies, the man would be obliged to pay the bride price for the body of the deceased female, whether or not they had children

before the final funeral rites can be performed for the deceased person or the groom is allowed to attend the funeral (Acquaah, 2023). In South Africa, if a woman dies while living with a partner who has not paid her bride price, traditionally known as “lobola,” the partner would be required to pay “lobola” to the woman’s family before she is allowed to be buried (Sennott et al., 2021). Secondly, the payment of the bride price legitimises all children born into the marriage and the groom as the children's father, thus making them eligible to be recruited into the groom's kin and giving the children access to their rightful inheritance (Forkuor et al., 2018). In some African cultures, if the groom defaults to pay the prescribed bride price, the bride’s father can claim ownership of the children and seize the bride from the supposed husband until the culturally accepted bride price is paid (Forkuor et al., 2018). Thirdly, the payment of the bride price is deemed to indemnify the bride’s family for the loss of her productive and reproductive labour and formalises the transfer of sexual and reproductive rights from the bride’s family to the groom’s family (Chae et al., 2021).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The challenge with the payment of bride price by the groom and his family is that it has been linked to the rising incidents of domestic violence, particularly spousal violence. Some scholars have explained that the payment of the bride price by only the prospective groom while the prospective bride and her family remain the recipients serves as the basis for men’s entrenched belief in their ownership of women during the marriage. This ownership mentality leads these grooms to believe that they are at liberty to treat the brides on whom they have paid the bride price in any way they please, hence increasing domestic violence incidence. Kaye et al. (2002) note that in Uganda, for instance, the payment of bride price emerged as one of the major causes of domestic violence, with a prevalence rate of 57% among pregnant women. Furthermore, Heise's (1998) framework for analysing the determinants of domestic violence pointed out the payment of the bride price as a factor that contributes to domestic violence against women. Kaye et al. (2005) argue that the incentives, processes, and consequences of the bride price customs are gendered and that the bride price culture reinforces male dominance and female subordination in intimate relationships such as marriages. Mangena and Ndlovu (2013) are also of the opinion that a woman becomes commoditised by a man who pays her bride price, with such men choosing to treat the women for whom they have paid the bride price in whichever way they please. Therefore, the bride price institution has become a tool for reinforcing patriarchal trends by propagating the low status of women and elevating the high status of men (Adjei & Mpiani, 2018).

Brides for whom bride price has been paid have also expressed their views and opinions about the practice. In a study by Kaye et al. (2005), participants perceived bride price payment as indicating that a woman has been bought into the man’s family, thus reducing her independence and autonomy within the marriage institution. In that study, the women who participated asserted that the payment of the bride price meant that women had limited or no decision-making powers within the household, thus perpetuating unequal gender power relations between married couples (Kaye et al., 2005). Hudson and Matfess (2017) argue that bride price payment reinforces and justifies the underinvestment in the development and well-being of women, resulting in their inability to negotiate safer sex, limiting the number of children they want to have, and unable to go to school because they were “bought.”

However, the literature explaining the relationship between bride price payment and domestic violence largely features the voices of women, while the voices of men are largely absent or limited. Thus, the evidence is largely tilted toward the experiences of women. Therefore, this study sought to find out from men their perceptions of the relationship between bride price payment and domestic violence.

1.2 Research Objectives and Hypothesis

Based on the above, the study's objectives are to (i) determine husbands' perceptions of the relationship between payment of bride price and household power relations and (ii) determine how household power relations can lead to domestic violence.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

The following research hypotheses guide the study.

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between the payment of bride price and domestic power relations.

H₀₂: There is no statistically significant relationship between the husband's use of household power and domestic violence.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 The Theory of Patriarchy

According to Haslanger (2020), the term ‘patriarchy’ was historically used to describe an inheritance system in which descent, title, and property were a bequest through the male lineage. Such systems were mostly found in societal groups that allocated greater power to men (Haslanger, 2020). Subsequently, a broader use of the term ‘patriarchy’ includes societies in which men as a social group hold greater power and authority over women and children (Haslanger, 2020). In theorising the term, scholars agree that patriarchy is a complex, multi-dimensional concept with different causal processes shaping the dimensions (Benstead, 2021) and how society is structured to allow men to control, oppress, and take advantage of women (Bonye et al., 2020). Another explanation of the theory of patriarchy, as presented by Sultana (2011), points to the traditional belief that men are born superior to women and that authority is vested in men to dominate while women are relegated, exploited and play the subservient role.

Within the context of this study, patriarchy is relevant in explaining the relationship between bride price payment and domestic violence because the practice is deeply intertwined with patriarchal norms and power dynamics and underscores the dominance of men and subordination of women by creating unequal power relations in the household. Feminists have argued that patriarchy and the payment of bride price commodify and objectify women, a phenomenon which further deepens the existing power imbalance between men and women within the household and domestic space. Such a situation can breed a fertile environment for the perpetuation of domestic violence if those with the greater power, which is usually the men according to the theory of patriarchy, apply this power in an abusive manner on those with the less power, in this case, the women.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Overview of Bride Price Payment

Empirical evidence shows that scholars continue extensively exploring the relationship between bride price payment and domestic violence. Many of such scholarly works have found a positive relationship between bride price payment and domestic violence, where the payment of the bride price is seen to affect gender relations, values, expectations and roles within the household context. For example, in a study conducted in the Wakiso district in Uganda on perceptions and experience of domestic violence, bride price payment emerged as one of the major causes of domestic violence in the district (Kaye et al., 2002).

Researchers argue that among cultures that practice the payment of bride price, such as those in Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, the practice signifies the complete handing over of the bride to the groom in exchange for the bride price items, which may be in the form of money, animals and commodities or a combination of all these items (Ashraf et al., 2020). Once the bride price is presented and accepted by the bride's family, she becomes the property of the groom, who has total control over the bride to be used and treated at the pleasure of the groom. Scholars such as Eves (2019) note that the cultural understanding and motivation for the payment of bride price is that it gives the groom absolute authority over the bride. Again, Adjei (2019) argues that the payment of bride price reinforces negative gender stereotypes, where the man is seen as the more respected partner who comes to ‘buy’ the woman into his household to feed, clothe, and shelter. In return, the woman is expected to be submissive, respectful, serviceable, and attend to the man's every need without complaint to be considered a good spouse (Adjei, 2019). Thus, bride price payment prescribes women's roles in marriages and further subordinates them to men (Dery, 2015). Despite the arguments put forward by such studies, the question remains as to how husbands or grooms perceive the bride price payment and its relationship with household power relations.

2.2.2 Perception of Husbands on the Relationship between Payment of Bride Price and Household Power Relations

Evidence in the literature shows the agreement of men with the assertion that bride price payment gives them power over their spouses. For instance, in a study conducted in the North Western Region of Ghana, which analysed bride price and domestic violence from an empirical perspective, Dery (2015) found that the majority of men who participated in that study confirmed the payment of bride price as their main source of legitimate power and authority over their spouses. In another study conducted in the Democratic Republic of Congo on the payment of bride price and the well-being of women, it was established that both men and women tend to believe that the payment of bride price resulted in more power to the men but for women, it resulted in less empowerment, worse marriages, and lower overall well-being (Lowes & Nunn, 2018).

In their examination of the effects of bride price on domestic violence and reproductive health in Wakiso District in Uganda, Kaye et al. (2005) discovered that bride price payments undermined women's empowerment by fostering unequal power dynamics between grooms and their brides, thereby diminishing the bride's independence and

authority in household decision-making. Indeed, through the payment of the bride price, women are said to relinquish their human rights to make decisions concerning many areas of their lives, such as fertility decisions (Mbaye & Wagner, 2017), reproductive health issues (Kaye et al., 2005), empowerment decisions (Mangena & Ndlovu, 2013) as well as access to, and ownership of property (Pemunta, 2017).

Based on the evidence in the literature, this study takes the stance that the payment of the bride indeed can be a basis for unequal household power relations between men and women, with men being held in high esteem as the most powerful and women as the least powerful. Combined with patriarchal norms and practices, bride price payment can be detrimental to the general well-being of brides and women in general.

2.2.3 The Use of Unequal Household Power by Men and Domestic Violence

While discussing the acquisition of household power by men through the payment of bride price, it is important to note that not all power is expressed negatively. Indeed, positive power, which describes the ability to initiate an activity, can achieve many positive outcomes (Güroğlu, 2021; Zhu, 2024). On the contrary, negative power, which describes the power to resist or stop an activity, can stifle progressive initiatives (Güroğlu, 2021). Thus, this study notes that possessing power does not necessarily threaten the development and well-being of those over whom power is held. Rather, using and possibly abusing that power should be the basis for an inquiry. Within the context of bride price payment and domestic violence, the assertion is thus made based on the above attributes and types of power that the power allotted to men through the payment of bride price may not always demean women and their value and does not create an environment for domestic violence. Indeed, in some cultures, the payment of a bride's price is perceived as an honour (Adjei, 2019).

However, Adjei (2019) posits that bride price payment creates ownership psychology in grooms, which may lead them to see their brides as their 'purchase' over whom they have unfettered authority. This can result in all forms of domestic violence, including physical and psychological abuse, a phenomenon that the theory of patriarchy has expressed. Additionally, the transactional nature of bride price payment contributes to the objectification and commodification of women in a marriage, where they are seen as 'acquired properties' over whom men exercise authority, power and control (Adjei, 2019). This kind of mentality associated with the payment of bride prices can lead to violence within the domestic environment if the power acquired through the bride price payment is applied negatively. Patriarchal theory suggests that the payment of the bride price leads to the commodification and objectification of women, and this can lead to domestic violence if the power acquired through this process is negatively applied.

Evidence in the literature suggests that men continue to apply the power acquired through the payment of bride price negatively, thus increasing cases of domestic violence. Several factors account for this. Among some ethnic groups in Africa, such as the Igbo of Nigeria (Ademiluka, 2021) and the Bakiga, Langi and Baganda of Uganda (Atekyereza, 2001), as a rule, the bride price must be returned in the event of divorce. Thus, Anderson (2007) notes that some women whose bride price have been paid are compelled to remain in abusive marriages because they fear returning to their natal homes because of their inability to repay or return the bride price. These women are, therefore, forced to remain in abusive marriages and endure violence (Falana, 2019). The phenomenon of returning bride prices is compounded by the perception that some women whose bride prices have been paid are privileged compared to their counterparts whose bride prices have not been paid. Adjei and Mpiani (2018) note that women with this ideology are more likely to interpret abuse from their spouses as 'normal' and dismiss or justify any incidents of ill-treatment.

Thus, based on the literature reviewed so far, this paper is grounded on the conceptualisation that bride price payment gives men power and authority over their spouses, giving rise to unequal household power relations. The problem arises when the power is applied wrongly and negatively, subjecting women to human rights abuses and suppressing the general well-being and development of women within the domestic environment, thus leading to domestic violence. These concepts upon which this study is hinged are presented in Figure 1 below.

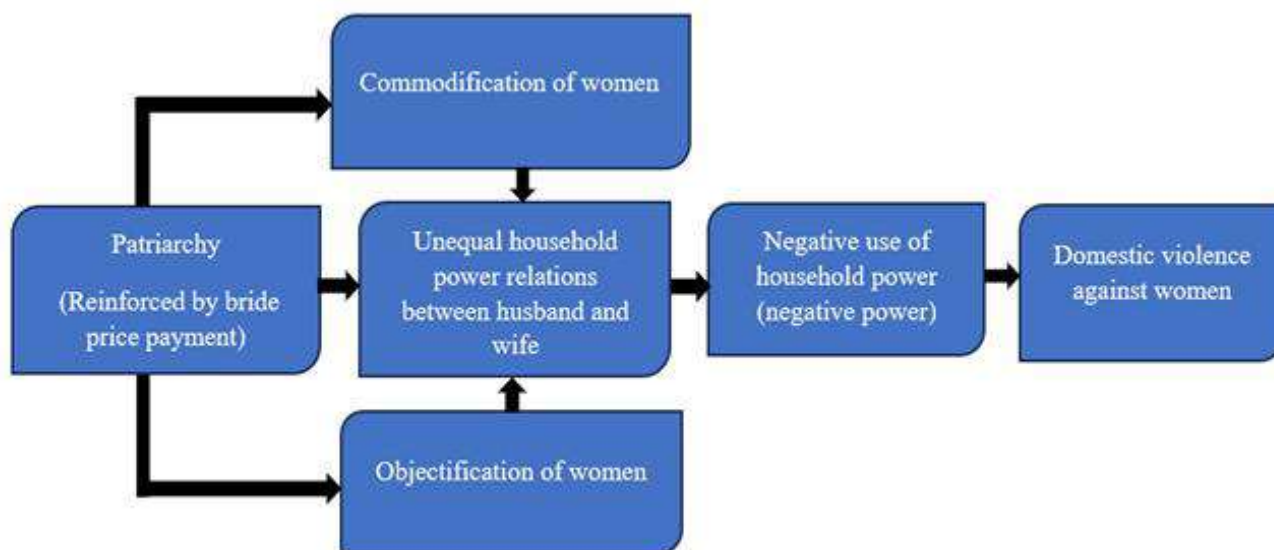


Figure 1

An Illustration of the Relationship between the Theory of Patriarchy, Bride Price Payment and Domestic Violence against Women

Source: Author’s construction (Based on the Relationship between Patriarchy Theory and Domestic Violence)

From Figure 1, it can be interpreted that the payment of bride price, which is a component of patriarchy, leads to unequal household power relations because of the idea of commodification and objectification of women through the process. This unequal household power relations results in the abuse of power by men, hence domestic violence against women. Thus, the payment of bride price can become a tool for oppressing and abusing women.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design for gathering and analysing data. Saunders et al. (2007) describe this survey design as an avenue to employ descriptive and inferential statistics to explain findings and answer the research questions, which is the focus of this study. To this end, the study collected quantitative data to establish a statistical representation of the research findings.

3.2 Target Population and Sample Size Determination

The study targeted registered auto mechanics operating in the Swidu mini-industrial area and fitting shops in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Auto mechanics are mainly considered artisans and, therefore, are grouped with people engaged in occupations such as vulcanising, electrical works, refrigerator repair, and air conditioner repair, amongst others (Afful-Arthur & Filson, 2019). Based on this information and using a 5% margin of error, the researchers arrived at a sample of 69 participants using the Yamane formula for sample size determination and a target population of 173.

3.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Sampling Study Participants

To be included in the study, sampled participants were expected to be married under any of the three types of marriages recognised in Ghana, namely Ordinance, Mohammedan or Customary marriage. The study also included married men who lived or did not live with their spouse in one household unit at the time of the study. The fact that the couple had children or not was not an inclusive criterion. However, men who were unmarried but living in a cohabitated relationship with a prospective bride were excluded from the study. Also excluded were men who were unmarried and did not have any intimate relationships at the time of the study.

3.4 Data Collection Instrument

To collect data relevant to achieving the objectives of the current study, the researchers developed a unique questionnaire to be administered to the married men sampled for the study. Subsequently, the instrument was shared with five (5) academic faculty members at the University of Cape Coast. The questionnaire was further modified

based on the recommendations and suggestions from the faculty members. The final questionnaire consisted of twelve (12) main question items and nine (9) sub-question items. Additionally, the questionnaire was subjected to a reliability test, where the instrument's internal consistency was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a result of 0.873. This result indicates that the questionnaire for this study had a high degree of internal consistency and that it could be relied upon to gather the data required to meet the research objectives.

3.5 Data Collection Process

The researchers administered 75 questionnaires, of which 69 completed ones were successfully received. Giving out more questionnaires ensured that the required sample was received. Data collection was done over three months, after which the results were compiled and analysed to arrive at the rightful conclusions about the relationship between bride price payment and domestic violence from the perspective of husbands.

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), excel packages, and the chi-square test. The results were then presented in descriptive, tabular, and statistical formats.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Response Rate and Study Variables

A total of 75 instruments were distributed to the study participants, of which 69 were completed and returned, indicating a response rate of 92%. Holtom et al. (2022) state that a response rate of more than 25% is considered adequate in a survey. Based on this recommendation, the researchers determined that the study's response rate of 92% was sufficient. The main variables considered in the instrument are the demographic characteristics of respondents, the perception of the cost of bride price, the relationship between bride price and household power relations, and the perceptions of the linkage between bride price, household power relations, and domestic violence. The results are presented below. Conclusions and recommendations are also offered.

4.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Study Participants

The main issues discussed under the demographic characteristics of respondents are age, educational status, number of years respondents have been married, number of children, and types of marriage among the respondents. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Study Respondents

Age of Study Respondents		
Age	Frequency	Percentage
25-30	6	9
31-35	4	6
36-40	13	19
41-45	12	17
46-50	17	25
51-55	14	20
56-60	3	4
Total	69	100
Educational Status of Respondents		
Education status	Frequency	Percentage
No formal education	0	0
Kindergarten	0	0
Primary school	9	13
Junior High School	18	26
Senior High school	22	32
Tertiary Education (Technical)	20	29
Tertiary Education (University)	0	0
Total	69	100



Number of Years Respondents Have Been Married		
Years in Marriage	Frequency	Percentage
0-5	10	14
6-10	17	25
11-15	11	16
16-20	15	22
21-25	11	16
Above 25	5	7
Total	69	100
Types of Marriage Among Respondents		
Marriage Type	Frequency	Percentage
Traditional	15	22
Ordinance	21	30
Mohammedan	33	48
Total	69	100
Number of Children		
No. of Children	Frequency	Percentage
1	7	10
2	15	22
3	18	26
4	12	17
Above 4	17	25
Total	69	100

Table 1 presents information on the age distribution of study participants. The findings indicate that most participants (25%) were 46-50 years old. The group with the least participants was those in the 56-60 age range at 4%. The results also indicate that the average age of the study respondents is forty-four (44) years. The table also presents the educational status of the study respondents. All the respondents had some form of formal education. Of 69 respondents, 32% indicated they had completed senior high school, 29% had technical education, 26% had junior high school, and 13% had primary education. No respondent had completed university, nor only kindergarten.

Additionally, the results presented in Table 1 show that most study respondents (25%) had been married for 6-10 years at the time of the study. This was followed by those married for 16-20 years (22%). For the respondents who had been married for 11-15 years and 21-25 years, both groups recorded 16%, 0-5 years, 14%, and above 25 years, 7%. Regarding the types of marriage, 48% of respondents reported being married under the Mohammedan law, 30% indicated ordinance, and 22% indicated traditional. Table 1 also reports on the number of children of the study respondents. In all, 25% had 3 children, followed by those with more than 4 children 24%, 2 children 22%, 4 children 17% and 1 child 10%.

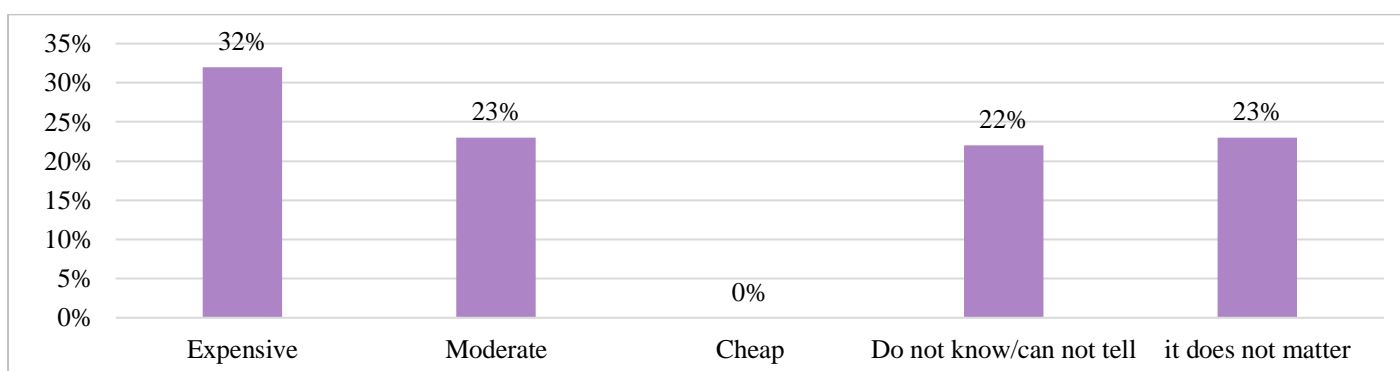


Figure 2
A Description of the Cost of the Customary Bride Price

Figure 2 presents the findings on respondents’ experience with the cost of the bride price. Overall, 32% of respondents indicated that the bride price was high, 23% stated that it was moderate, 23% thought the cost did not matter, and 22% did not have an opinion or could not tell. None of the respondents thought that the cost of the bride price was cheap. The fact that most respondents found the cost expensive agrees with some scholarly findings such as those by Harefa (2022), whose research on bride price among the Nias tribe in North Sumatra, Indonesia, found that



bride price tended to be so expensive that it burdened and created intensive economic pressures for the new household of the bride and groom. Other scholars, such as Li and Li (2023) and Ndangoh (2022), have conducted research in which respondents indicated that the cost of the bride price is expensive.

Further, the study sought to find out from husbands whether a high bride price gave them more superior power over their spouses by asking the question, ‘Do you believe a higher bride price gives you more power in your household?’ The responses are presented in Figure 3 below.

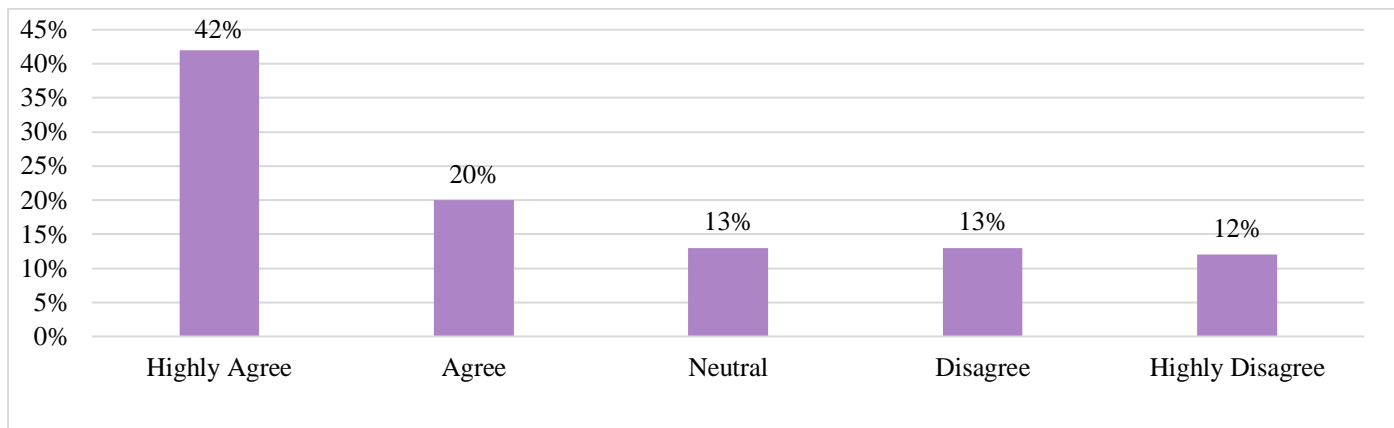


Figure 3
Respondents Description of the Relationship between Bride Price and Household Power Relations

Figure 3 above sought to investigate respondents' opinions on the relationship between bride price payment and power relations. A total of 42% of respondents agreed to a high degree that a higher bride price gives them more power than the women in their households, 20% agreed, 13% were neutral, another 13% disagreed, and 12% disagreed with a high degree.

4.2 The Perception of Husbands of the Relationship between Payment of Bride Price and Household Power Relations

This objective sought to determine from the husbands' perspective whether there is a relationship between the payment of the bride price and the power relations in their households. To achieve this, respondents were first requested to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the statement, ‘I believe my wife and I should have equal rights in the household even though I paid the bride price’. The result is presented below.

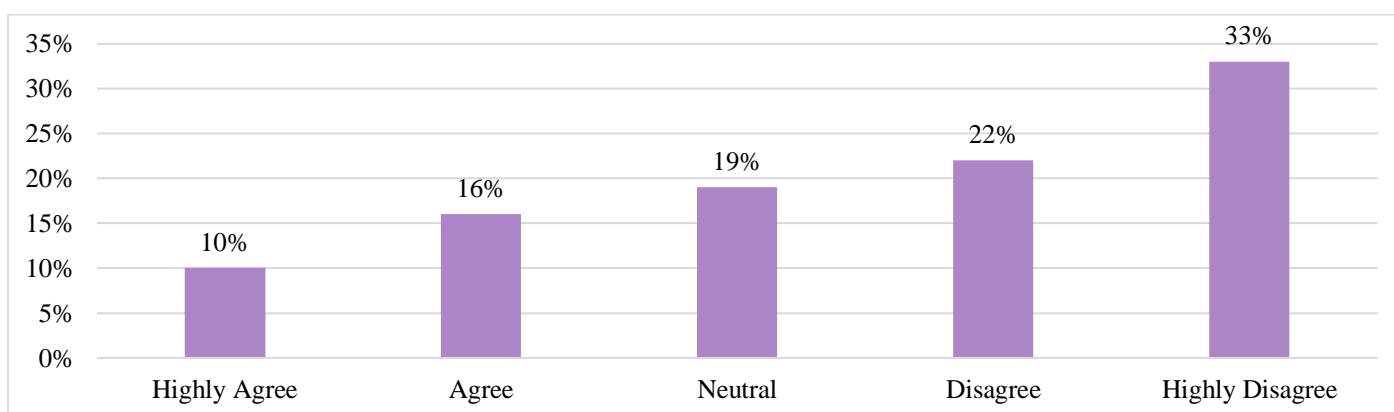


Figure 4
Husbands' Response on Equal Power Share with their Spouses Despite Paying Bride Price

Figure 4 investigated respondents' perceptions of power share and equal rights between spouses regarding the price of the bride's payment. 33% of respondents highly disagreed that there should be equal rights despite the man paying the bride price, 22% disagreed, 19% remained neutral, 16% agreed, and 10% highly agreed.

The objective also sought to establish some behaviours which husbands can exhibit to show that bride price payment gives them power over their spouses by asking respondents to choose their responses from the statement, ‘I



believe the payment of my wife’s bride price may cause me to discipline her when she does something wrong’. This revealed the results presented in Figure 5 below.

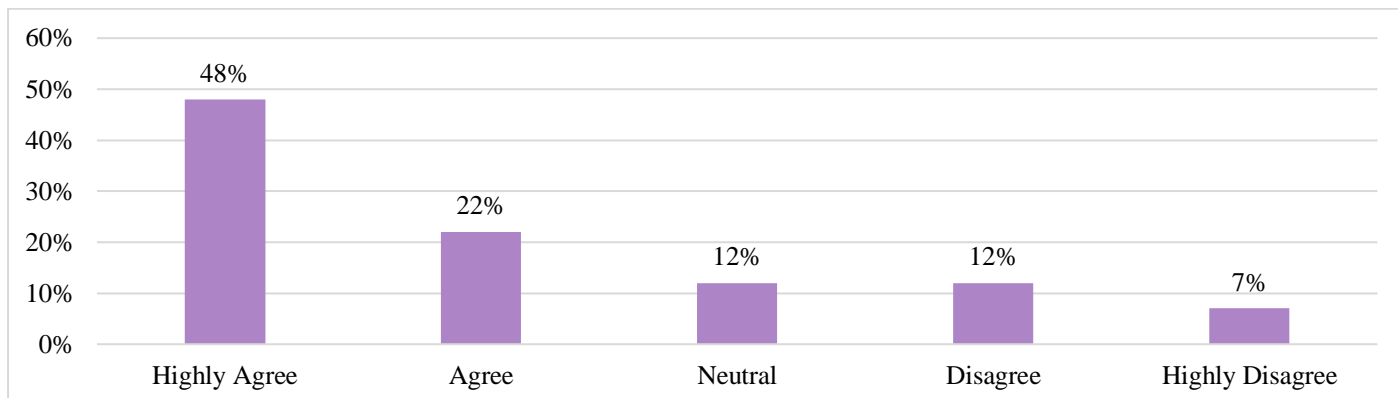


Figure 5
Husbands’ Responses on the Payment of Bride Price and the Act of Disciplining their Spouses

Figure 5 sought to determine if the bride price payment may influence the relationship and power dynamics between the spouses. A total of 48% of respondents agreed to a high degree that their payment of bride price might cause them to ‘discipline’ their spouse when they do something wrong, 22% agreed, 12% remained neutral, 12% disagreed, and only 7% disagreed to a high degree.

Further, the study sought to determine the relationship between bride price payment and domestic power relations by requesting respondents to indicate their agreement or disagreement with several carefully selected variables. These variables and the responses are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2
Bride Price Payment and Domestic Power Relations

Perception	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total (%)
The bride price I paid gives me power in my household.	48	36	3	7	6	100
Even if my spouse helped me or contributed to the bride price, I still have the power because I am the man.	43	38	6	6	7	100
I have power because I am a man, not because of the bride price.	45	35	4	9	7	100
If the woman pays the bride price, she should have power in the household.	7	9	0	35	49	100
A woman cannot have the power even if she paid the bride price.	67	26	0	7	0	100
Even if my wife paid my bride price, I still have the power.	54	29	0	7	10	100
Men should have power in the household regardless of who paid the bride price.	45	32	4	10	9	100
Power in the house is for men and not women.	51	32	0	10	7	100

Note: SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

Table 2 above displays respondents' perceptions of bride price payment and its relations with domestic power relations. Respondents were asked some questions and required to strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Firstly, when asked about their perception of whether the bride price they paid gives them power in their households, 48% of respondents strongly agreed, 36% disagreed, 7% disagreed, 6% agreed, and 3% remained neutral. Secondly, respondents were asked about their perception of the power dynamics in their households. Even if their wives contributed to the payment of the bride price, 43% of respondents strongly agreed that even in such instances, they still had more power than their wives because they were still men. Again, 38% agreed with the same perception, 6% remained neutral, 7% strongly disagreed and 6% disagreed. Thirdly, respondents were asked about their perception of this assertion: “I have power because I am a man, not because of the bride price”. To this, 45% of respondents strongly agreed, 35% agreed, 9% disagreed, 7% strongly disagreed and only 4% remained neutral.

Fourthly, 49% of respondents strongly disagreed with the opinion that even if a woman pays the bride price, she should have a greater share of the household power. Also, 35% of respondents disagreed with the same assertion,

9% strongly agreed, and 7% agreed. Fifthly, 67% of respondents strongly agree that even if a woman pays the bride, she cannot have the household power. To that same opinion, 26% agreed, and 7% disagreed. On the sixth variable, respondents were asked about their perception that ‘even if my wife paid my bride piece, I still have the power’: 54% strongly agreed, 32% agreed, 10% disagreed, and 9% strongly disagreed. Furthermore, respondents were asked to respond to the idea that “men should have the power in the household regardless of who paid the bride price.” 45% strongly agreed, 32% agreed, 10% disagreed, 9% strongly disagreed, and 4% remained neutral. Lastly, 51% of respondents agreed that power in the household belonged to men, not women. Also, 32% of respondents agreed with the same assertion, 10% disagreed, and 7% strongly disagreed. Further, the study conducted a chi-square test using the following null hypothesis:

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between the payment of bride price and domestic power relations. The result of the hypothesis test is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Chi-Square Tests on the Relationship between Bride Price Payment and Domestic Power Relations

Test Statistic	Value
Pearson Chi-square (χ^2)	234.37
Degree of Difference	28
P-value	<0.05
Critical chi-square value	41.3379
Conclusion	Reject the null hypothesis.

The results from Table 3 suggest that there is indeed a significant relationship between bride price payment and household power dynamics. The results of the chi-square tests ($\chi^2=234.37$, $df=28$, $p<0.05$) give enough statistical evidence to suggest that bride price payment significantly influences household power relations among the respondents of this study. In other words, since the chi-square statistic (234.37) is higher than the critical value (41.3379) at a significance level of 0.05, we reject the idea that there is no connection between bride price payment and household power dynamics.

Thus, a statistically significant relationship exists between bride price payment and household power distribution or dynamics. Again, this indicates that because husbands pay the bride price, they become the more powerful members of the African nuclear family.

From all the results gathered from the variables associated with objective 1, there is an overwhelming agreement among the husbands who responded to the questionnaire that the bride price gives them superior power over their spouses or the women for whom the bride price has been paid. This is believed to be the result or a combination of factors. The majority of the respondents (48%) believed that the payment of the bride price in itself gives them power over the women to whom the bride price was paid. Some respondents (43%) believed strongly that even if their brides contributed to the bride price payment, the bigger household power should belong to them as men. Further, most (42%) respondents believed that a higher bride price gives them more power over their spouses. Additionally, most respondents (33%) believed that the payment of bride price should give them more access to household resources. The chi-square test also revealed a statistically significant relationship between the bride price payment and household power relations where men have more power over women and women’s household power is diminished.

These figures show that bride price payment gives men superior powers over their wives, which conforms with what is found in the existing literature. For instance, as indicated earlier, Dery (2015), in his study of bride price payment in the North Western Region of Ghana, found that most men found the practice as their main source of legitimate power and authority over their wives for whom they have paid the bride price. Furthermore, this finding evidenced in the data above and the chi-square test is supported by other studies, such as Bonye et al. (2020), who posit that the payment of bride price increases men’s power over women and diminishes women’s power. Asimwe (2013) further add that bride price payment has negative implications for women’s negotiating power and relations in marriages, resulting in gender inequality.

This phenomenon contradicts goal one target 1.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which states that ‘by 2030, all men and women, in particular people with low incomes and the vulnerable, should have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance’ (United Nations [UN], 2015). Many more scholarly works, such as Mbaye and Wagner (2017), Kaye et al. (2005), Mangena and Ndlovu (2013) and Pemunta (2017), support the findings from this current study that payment of bride price gives more power and authority to men over women.



However, it remains that the ideas and strong beliefs stemming from the payment of the bride price create room and avenues for unequal power relations between men and women within the domestic arena. The former assumes the greater share of the power, and the latter assumes the lesser share, assuming there is some power left after the groom has taken hold of the powers he believes should be given to him or to which he is entitled.

Overall, these findings highlight the complex interplay between cultural norms, financial obligations, and gender dynamics within marital relationships in the context of this study’s topic. The analysis suggests that the bride price payment influences power distribution within the domestic and household environment, with husbands typically assuming a more dominant role. This is also supported by the results of the study’s first hypothesis, which suggests a statistically significant relationship between the payment of bride price and household power relations from the perspective of husbands in the Siwdu light industrial area in the Cape Coast Metropolis, Ghana.

4.3 The Relationship between Household Power Relations and Domestic Violence

Once the study established a relationship between bride price payment and household power relations, the researchers further sought to demonstrate how the power is used and its relationship with domestic abuse. For this, respondents were asked some questions to assess their opinions and perceptions about using the power they have acquired through paying the bride price. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4
The Use of Household Power by Husbands and Domestic Abuse in African Nuclear Families

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total (%)
I exercise power as a man to keep my wife in check as part of my responsibilities.	49	25	1	12	13	100
I am comfortable with the power dynamics between my spouse and myself.	57	20	3	14	6	100
My spouse is comfortable with the power dynamics between herself and me.	19	17	1	29	33	100
Sometimes, I feel pressured to assert power over my spouse in a manner she does not agree with.	36	26	4	22	12	100
Sometimes, my spouse feels that how I exert power over her is harsh.	39	28	4	16	13	100
Sometimes, my spouse feels hurt by how I exercise power over her.	39	26	3	17	14	100
I have made my spouse cry by exercising my power as the man.	43	19	1	23	14	100
My spouse has reported me to her family elders in the past because of the way I exercise power over her.	42	19	0	20	19	100
In the past, my wife has hinted at divorce because of the way I exercise power over her.	25	16	7	33	19	100
Sometimes, my spouse resists the actions through which I choose to exercise power over her.	41	22	3	16	19	100
Exercising my power as the man is important to keep my wife in control.	36	26	4	17	16	100
My spouse may not always like how I exercise my power, but I will still do it to save her and my household.	39	26	1	19	14	100

SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

Table 4 above presents respondents' perceptions of household power use. Respondents were asked several questions and required to indicate the extent of their agreement by choosing a response that best fits their opinion. The responses ranged from strongly agree to agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Respondents were asked to indicate their opinion on the question, “I exercise power as a man to keep my wife in check as part of my responsibilities”. To this, 49% strongly agreed, 25% agreed, 1% remained neutral, 12% disagreed, and 13% strongly disagreed. Respondents also responded to the statement, “I am comfortable with the power dynamics between my spouse and myself”. According to this statement, 57% of respondents strongly agreed, 20% agreed, 1% were neutral, 29% disagreed, and 33% strongly disagreed. Respondents were also asked to indicate their opinion on the statement, “Sometimes, I feel pressured to assert power over my spouse in a manner she does not agree with.” To this statement, 39% strongly agreed, 28% disagreed, 4% were neutral, 16% disagreed, and 13% strongly disagreed. Regarding the statement, “Sometimes, my spouse feels that how I exert power over her is harsh”, 39% of respondents strongly agreed, 28% agreed, 4% remained neutral, 16% disagreed, and 13% strongly disagreed. Asked about their opinion on the statement, “Sometimes, my spouse feels hurt by how I exercise power over her”, 39% of respondents strongly agreed, 26% agreed, 3% were neutral, 17% disagreed, and 14% strongly disagreed. Respondents were also asked for their responses on the statement “I have made my spouse cry by exercising my power as the man”, to which 43% strongly agreed, 19% agreed, 1% were neutral, 23% disagreed, and 14% strongly disagreed.

Additionally, regarding the statement, “My spouse has reported me to her family elders in the past because of the way I exercised power over her”, 42% strongly agreed, 19% agreed, 20% disagreed, and 19% strongly disagreed. When asked whether their spouses have hinted at divorce in the past because of the way they exercise power over her, 25% of respondents strongly agreed, 16% agreed, 7% were neutral, 33% disagreed, and 19% strongly disagreed. In response to the statement, “Sometimes, my spouse resists the actions through which I choose to exercise power over her”, 41% strongly agreed, 22% agreed, 3% were neutral, 16% disagreed, and 19% strongly disagreed.

For this statement, “Exercising my power as the man is important to keep my wife in control,” 36% of respondents strongly agreed, 26% agreed, 4% remained neutral, 17% disagreed, and 16% strongly disagreed.

Regarding the statement, “My spouse may not always like how I exercise my power, but I will still do it to save her and my household”, 39% of respondents strongly agreed, 26% agreed, 1% remained neutral, 19% disagreed, and 14% strongly disagreed.

A chi-square test to determine whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the husbands' use of power and domestic violence was conducted and presented in Table 5 using the following null hypothesis:

H_{02} : *There is no statistically significant relationship between the husbands' use of household power and domestic violence.*

Table 5

Chi-Square Tests on the Relationship Between Domestic Power Relations and Domestic Violence

Test Statistic	Value
Pearson Chi-square (χ^2)	269.46
Degree of Difference	44
P-value	<0.05
Critical chi-square value	62.429
Conclusion	Reject the null hypothesis.

The results, presented in Table 5, show a significant relationship between household power relations and domestic abuse ($\chi^2 = 269.46$, $df = 44$, $p < 0.05$). The chi-square statistic is much larger than expected under the null hypothesis, and the p-value is smaller than 0.05. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant association between household power dynamics and domestic violence from the perspective of the study participants.

In examining the relationship between bride price payment and domestic violence, the study has so far revealed that bride price payment may lead to unequal power relations and subsequently domestic violence within the respondents' households. The challenge is that the issue of gender inequality and power imbalances in domestic relationships have been proven to be the main cause of domestic abuse and violence against women worldwide. Research has shown that domestic violence and abuse against women are often perpetuated by an intimate partner in the form of sexual or physical abuse. For instance, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that globally, one in three women has experienced domestic violence, mostly physical or sexual, at the hands of an intimate partner (WHO, 2021).

In this study, an overwhelming percentage (49%) of respondents believed that part of their household power is disciplining or controlling their wives as part of their responsibilities as husbands. The idea of control or discipline connotes a level of superiority, use of violence and dominance of men over women in the domestic environment. The study argues that these patriarchally driven ideas and beliefs tend to result in men's misuse and abuse of household power. In this study, some respondents indicated negative reactions from their spouses as a result of the use of household power, including retaliation, crying, and even hinting at divorce, all indicating a level of abuse and violence against the women, even from the perspective of the husbands. Thus, the results from the study's second hypothesis indicate a statistically significant relationship between the husbands' use of household power and domestic violence.

These findings are not different from what has been discussed in the study's review of related literature, where the evidence pointed to the abuse or misuse of household power by most men who had paid their spouses' bride price. As an example, Hague et al. (2011) note that bride price payment introduces a new dimension to men's unfettered powers over women, which is deeply rooted in the theory of patriarchy and different ways in which men can justify the abuse of women. Further, the commodification of wives has led to toxic social impacts, especially in terms of increased domestic violence and the abuse of male power over women (Hague et al., 2011).

In other studies, researchers have attributed the payment of bride price and the power it gives to men, which is compounded by the cultural practice of patriarchy, to different forms of abuse they and their children experience, including physical, financial and even sexual (Dery, 2015). This supports and confirms the findings from this study that the power designated to men through the payment of bride price is often used negatively, thus leading to increased domestic violence cases. Other studies in the literature which support the finding that men's power and authority

derived from the payment of bride price have been used negatively is shown by Frost and Dodoo (2010), who explored adolescent boys' gendered expectations for bridewealth and marriage among the Akwapims of Southern Ghana. In that study, bride price payment emerged as one of the factors associated with men's power and domestic violence against women (Frost & Dodoo, 2010). The study also concluded that bride price payment does not only give men the power to dominate and abuse women within the domestic arena but also justifies the use of violence against women (Frost & Dodoo, 2010). From the preceding, it is evident that the findings of this current study on the relationship between the use of men's power derived from the payment of bride price and domestic violence are related and supported by existing literature.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The study has shed light on the perception of husbands on the relationship between the payment of bride price, household power dynamics and domestic violence. The evidence showed that a significant proportion of husbands view the payment of bride price as conferring upon them superior power over their spouses.

This is fuelled by factors such as the cost of the bride price and the traditional beliefs surrounding the practice. The study has further highlighted unequal power relations within the respondents' households, with many husbands admitting to using their perceived power to discipline or control their spouses. Such attitudes fuel and perpetuate gender inequality and create a space where domestic abuse and violence against women thrive.

These findings undoubtedly have deep implications, emphasising the critical necessity for interventions focused on dismantling ingrained gender norms and fostering fair relationships within the home. Taking action to challenge the concept of bride price as a tool for asserting control over women, alongside initiatives to educate husbands on respectful and non-violent methods of wielding household authority, are essential strides toward cultivating healthier and more egalitarian domestic settings. Ultimately, this study highlights the necessity of addressing the deep-seated beliefs and attitudes that fuel unequal power dynamics within marriages. This is crucial to creating environments where both partners can flourish without coercion, abuse or violence.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the insights gleaned from this study, some recommendations can be made to address the issues surrounding husbands' perceptions of the payment of bride price, its relationship with household power, and attitudes towards its use. The study recommends education and campaigns aimed at challenging the traditional beliefs and norms surrounding the payment of bride price, counselling, and support services for abusers and victims, women's empowerment, and men's engagement programs to encourage reflections on their roles and responsibilities in the household as well promote positive masculinity. This will also contribute to promoting gender equality in relationships, which aligns with calls to dismantle discriminatory gender norms that promote the subordination and dependency of women on men.

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