



Influence of Gender Role Expectations on Gender-Based Violence among Women of Reproductive Age in Turkana County, Kenya

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Abstract: Gender-based violence remains a major public health and human rights concern, with cultural beliefs and practices shaping gender relations and women's vulnerability to violence. This study examined the influence of gender role expectations on gender-based violence among women of reproductive age in Turkana County, Kenya. The study was anchored on Radical Feminist Theory and Cultural Theory. The study adopted a mixed-methods research approach and employed a convergent parallel research design. The target population comprised 430 participants, including 400 women of reproductive age and 30 key informants. A sample of 230 participants was included, comprising 200 women selected through simple random sampling and 30 key informants purposively selected based on their knowledge of gender relations, cultural practices, and gender-based violence. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and interview guides. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS Version 29 through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The findings showed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between gender role expectations and gender-based violence ($r = .647, p < .01$). Restrictive expectations concerning male authority, women's domestic responsibilities, and female autonomy were associated with increased vulnerability to violence. Qualitative findings supported the quantitative results, indicating that women who challenged prescribed gender roles could experience conflict, social sanctions, or violence. The study concludes that restrictive gender role expectations significantly influence gender-based violence and recommends interventions that promote gender-equitable roles, shared decision-making, and women's autonomy.

Key words: Gender role expectations; gender-based violence; women of reproductive age; gender norms; Turkana County

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1. Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a major public health and human rights concern, disproportionately affecting women and girls worldwide. It includes physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence perpetrated on the basis of gender (De la Parra-Guerra et al., 2025). Globally, nearly one in three women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence, predominantly by an

intimate partner (World Health Organization [WHO], 2024). Despite strengthened legal and policy responses, GBV persists, partly because of social norms and gender inequalities that shape relationships and women's vulnerability to violence (Smith, 2021).

Gender role expectations are socially constructed beliefs about the behaviours, responsibilities, and authority

considered appropriate for women and men. In patriarchal settings, men are often expected to exercise authority and decision-making power, while women are expected to be submissive, accommodating, and responsible for domestic and reproductive roles (Farias et al., 2023). Such expectations can reinforce unequal power relations and increase women's vulnerability to violence, particularly when women challenge prescribed roles (Thelma, 2024). Gender stereotypes have also been associated with physical, psychological, and sexual violence against women (Steffen, 2020).

Gender role expectations are learned and reinforced through families, communities, and broader cultural practices. Socialization that associates masculinity with dominance and control and femininity with submission and tolerance can normalize unequal relationships and attitudes that justify violence (Ani & Katende-Kyenda, 2025). Similarly, cultural practices such as bride price may reinforce perceptions of male authority and female dependence in some settings (Taringa & Museka, 2021). Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa shows that patriarchal norms, rigid gender roles, and controlling behaviours contribute to women's vulnerability to GBV (Mossie et al., 2023; Katende-Kyenda & Ani, 2025).

Evidence from East Africa further indicates that women living in communities where male dominance is socially accepted are more likely to experience intimate partner violence (Ouma et al., 2021). In Uganda and Tanzania, harmful cultural practices, acceptance of violence, and stigma against survivors have also been associated with limited reporting and access to justice (Kiwuwa-Muyingo & Kadengye, 2022; Kihyo & Msoka, 2024). These findings demonstrate that gender norms influence not only women's exposure to violence but also community responses to it.

In Kenya, GBV remains prevalent despite an established legal and policy framework. The 2022 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey reported that 34% of women aged 15–49 years had experienced physical violence since age 15, while 41% of ever-married women had experienced violence from an intimate partner (KNBS, 2023). Patriarchal beliefs, rigid gender roles, traditional socialization, and practices that reinforce male authority continue to influence women's autonomy and vulnerability to violence (Bhandari, 2023).

Turkana County presents a distinct context for examining this relationship because of its predominantly pastoralist livelihoods and strong traditional gender norms (Derbyshire, 2020). Patriarchal family structures, traditional gender roles, bride price, and gender socialization influence women's social position and participation in household decision-making. GBV remains

a significant concern in the county, with approximately 42% of women aged 15–49 years reported to have experienced physical violence since age 15 (Turkana County Government, 2025). Despite ongoing prevention and response interventions, limited empirical evidence has specifically examined how gender role expectations influence GBV among women of reproductive age in Turkana County. Therefore, this study examined the influence of gender role expectations on gender-based violence among women of reproductive age in Turkana County, Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Gender-based violence remains a major public health and human rights concern in Kenya despite established legal and policy measures, including the Constitution of Kenya (2010), Sexual Offences Act (2006), Protection Against Domestic Violence Act (2015), and National Policy on Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence (2022). Nevertheless, GBV remains prevalent, with the proportion of ever-married women aged 15–49 years who experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence by a husband increasing from 39% in 2014 to 41% in 2022 (KNBS & ICF, 2023). In Turkana County, approximately 42% of women of reproductive age have experienced physical violence (Turkana County Government, 2026).

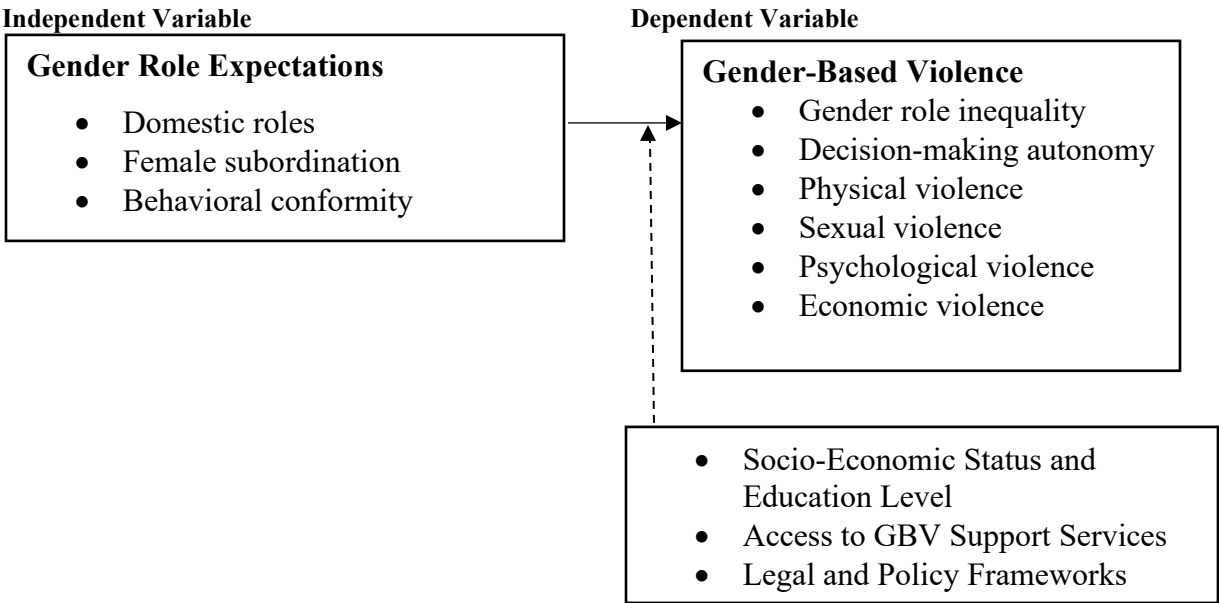
Rigid gender role expectations, including beliefs about male authority and female submissiveness, may reinforce unequal power relations and increase women's vulnerability to GBV (Kagotho et al., 2025; Mutambo, 2023). However, limited empirical evidence has specifically examined the influence of gender role expectations on GBV among women of reproductive age in Turkana County. Existing studies have largely examined GBV prevalence, general cultural factors, or legal responses, providing limited context-specific evidence on how expectations regarding women's and men's roles contribute to violence within Turkana's sociocultural setting (Kung'u & Kamau, 2023; Okeyo et al., 2025). This evidence gap limits the development of interventions that address the gender norms underlying GBV. Therefore, this study examined the influence of gender role expectations on gender-based violence among women of reproductive age in Turkana County, Kenya.

1.3 Research Objective

Gender role expectations influence how women's and men's roles, responsibilities, and power relations are defined within communities. Rigid expectations that reinforce male authority and female submissiveness may contribute to unequal power relations and increase women's vulnerability to gender-based violence.

Examining this relationship was therefore important for understanding the contribution of gender role expectations to GBV in Turkana County. Therefore, the objective of the study was to examine the influence of gender role expectations on gender-based violence among women of reproductive age in Turkana County, Kenya.

1.4 Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher (2026)

2. Literature Review

This section reviews empirical literature on gender role expectations and how they gender-based violence among women. It synthesizes existing evidence, highlights areas of agreement and divergence, and identifies gaps that informed the examination of this relationship in Turkana County, Kenya.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Radical Feminist Theory and Cultural Theory, which provide complementary perspectives for understanding how gendered power relations and cultural norms shape gender role expectations and women's vulnerability to gender-based violence.

2.1.1 Radical Feminist Theory

Radical Feminist Theory, advanced by Shulamith Firestone in *The Dialectic of Sex*, explains women's oppression in terms of patriarchal structures that sustain male dominance and female subordination (Firestone,

The figure below presents the conceptual framework of the study. The independent variable was gender role expectations, while the dependent variable was gender-based violence among women of reproductive age in Turkana County, Kenya. The framework also identifies relevant moderating factors that may influence the relationship between gender role expectations and gender-based violence but were not the primary focus of the study.

1970). The theory views gender relations as socially constructed and reinforced through cultural norms and social practices. From this perspective, gender role expectations that privilege male authority and female submissiveness may reproduce unequal power relations and increase women's vulnerability to gender-based violence (Dahal et al., 2022).

A key strength of the theory is its emphasis on the structural and cultural roots of violence against women. It therefore provides a useful lens for understanding how gender socialization and patriarchal norms can normalize male control and unequal gender relations (Alldred, 2023). However, the theory has been criticized for its predominantly Western orientation and limited attention to variations across cultural and social contexts (Mavengano, 2022). Its application in non-Western settings therefore requires consideration of locally specific forms of gender relations and women's experiences (Alldred, 2023).

In this study, Radical Feminist Theory provided a framework for examining how gender role expectations may reinforce male authority, female subordination, and unequal power relations, thereby contributing to gender-based violence among women of reproductive age in

Turkana County. The theory was particularly relevant for examining how locally embedded gender expectations shape women's experiences of violence within the study context.

2.1.2 Cultural Theory

Cultural Theory explains human behaviour as shaped by shared beliefs, norms, values, and traditions that define acceptable roles and behaviours within society. Geertz (1973) emphasizes that culture provides systems of meaning through which individuals understand and organize social behaviour. Applied to gender-based violence, the theory suggests that cultural norms influence gender role expectations and shape how relationships between women and men are understood and practiced. Norms that emphasize male authority, female submissiveness, or women's compliance with prescribed roles may contribute to the acceptance and normalization of gender-based violence (Nartey, 2023).

A key principle of Cultural Theory is that socialization transmits cultural norms and values across generations. Wondimu (2022) notes that these processes shape individuals' understanding of acceptable gender roles and behaviours. Consequently, culturally defined expectations may reinforce unequal gender relations and influence women's vulnerability to violence. The theory is useful in examining the interaction between individual behaviour and broader cultural values, although it may understate individual agency and differences within communities (Adongo et al., 2023).

In this study, Cultural Theory provided a framework for examining how culturally defined gender role expectations influence gender relations and contribute to gender-based violence among women of reproductive age in Turkana County. It was particularly relevant for understanding how shared cultural beliefs and expectations regarding women's and men's roles may reinforce unequal gender relations and shape women's vulnerability to GBV within the study context.

2.2 Review of Empirical Literature

This section reviews empirical evidence on gender role expectations and gender-based violence, highlighting existing findings and the gaps addressed by the study in Turkana County, Kenya.

2.2.1 Gender Role Expectations and Gender-Based Violence among Women of Reproductive Age

Gender role expectations shape socially accepted behaviours, responsibilities, and power relations between women and men. Evidence across diverse settings indicates

that rigid expectations emphasizing male authority, female obedience, caregiving, and economic dependence can reinforce unequal power relations and increase women's vulnerability to gender-based violence. Siddiqui (2025) argues that such expectations may not only influence the occurrence of violence but also shape its acceptance within intimate and community relationships.

Empirical studies consistently support this relationship, although the mechanisms and contexts vary. In England, Enock et al. (2024) found that entrenched gender norms were associated with harassment, coercive control, intimate partner violence, and digital abuse, with women who challenged conventional roles experiencing greater psychological abuse. Similarly, Yamamoto and Suzuki (2022) found in Japan that women who departed from traditional housewife roles, particularly through employment and greater participation in household decision-making, faced increased risks of domestic violence. These findings suggest that violence may be used to reinforce established gender expectations when women challenge male authority. However, the studies were largely situated in developed and urban settings, limiting their applicability to culturally distinct and marginalized communities.

Evidence from African settings further demonstrates the role of gender expectations in normalizing violence. Abdoulaye and Issoufou (2023) found in Nigeria that expectations of female obedience and responsibility for household and reproductive roles increased tolerance of male aggression. In Cameroon, Bih (2025) similarly reported that expectations of male household authority and female economic dependence legitimized male dominance and violence, with childbearing and caregiving responsibilities increasing women's vulnerability. Niyonkuru (2021) reported comparable findings in Burundi, where expectations of male authority and female obedience contributed to domestic and sexual violence while discouraging survivors from seeking justice. Taken together, these studies indicate that gender role expectations operate not only as individual attitudes but also as socially reinforced norms that can sustain and normalize violence.

Kenyan evidence reflects similar patterns. Kung'u and Kamau (2023) found that childhood socialization encouraged boys to adopt dominant roles and girls to become submissive and tolerant, reinforcing gender inequalities into adulthood. Moore (2025) further identified male-control and female-subordination ideologies as significant predictors of intimate partner violence among women. Mburuki (2026), although focusing on GBV against men in Meru County, similarly found that rigid gender expectations could influence the justification and acceptance of violence within intimate

relationships. These findings collectively demonstrate that gender expectations can shape both exposure to violence and perceptions of its legitimacy. However, much of the Kenyan evidence is national or drawn from non-pastoralist settings, limiting understanding of how these expectations operate within pastoralist communities.

The evidence converges on the role of rigid gender role expectations in reinforcing unequal power relations and increasing the risk or acceptance of GBV. However, differences in study populations, settings, and methodologies indicate that the relationship is context-dependent. Most existing studies have focused on urban, national, or non-pastoralist populations, with limited evidence on women of reproductive age in pastoralist communities. In particular, evidence on how gender role expectations influence GBV in Turkana County remains limited. This study therefore examined the influence of gender role expectations on GBV among women of reproductive age in Turkana County, Kenya.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach using a convergent parallel design, whereby quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed separately and integrated during interpretation. The design enabled the study to assess the influence of gender role expectations on gender-based violence while obtaining contextual insights from key informants.

The study was conducted in Turkana Central Sub-County, Turkana County, Kenya. The target population comprised 430 participants, including 400 women of reproductive age (15–49 years) and 30 key informants comprising community elders, local leaders, and gender and social welfare officers. A sample of 230 participants was selected, comprising 200 women and 30 key informants. Simple random sampling was used to select the women, while key informants were purposively selected based on their knowledge of gender roles and GBV.

Data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to the 200 women and semi-structured interviews conducted with the 30 key informants. Questionnaire items were measured primarily using a five-point Likert scale. The instruments were reviewed by experts for content validity and pilot-tested among 23 respondents in Lodwar Town. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with coefficients of 0.70 or above considered acceptable. Gender role expectations recorded $\alpha = 0.85$, while gender-based violence recorded $\alpha = 0.87$.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS Version 30. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression were used to analyze the data. The regression model was $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \epsilon$, where Y represents gender-based violence and X represents gender role expectations. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically and integrated with the quantitative findings.

Ethical approval and the necessary research authorizations were obtained before data collection. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study.

4. Results and Discussion

The study obtained responses from 224 of the 230 targeted participants, representing an overall response rate of 97.4%. Among the women of reproductive age, 194 of the 200 targeted participants returned completed questionnaires, corresponding to a 97.0% response rate. In addition, all 30 key informants completed the interviews, giving a 100% response rate. The high level of participation provided sufficient data for statistical analysis and interpretation of the study findings. The findings are presented using descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, as shown in Table 1.

n=194

Table 1: Response on Gender Role Expectation

Statements	SD F (%)	D F (%)	N F (%)	A F (%)	SA F (%)	Mean	Std Dvt
Men and women in my community are encouraged to share roles and responsibilities equally.	46 (23.7)	61 (31.4)	21 (10.8)	45 (23.2)	21 (10.8)	2.66	1.30
Women are expected to prioritize household duties over personal or professional goals.	5 (2.6)	11 (5.7)	16 (8.2)	94 (48.5)	68 (35.1)	4.08	0.91
Women are free to make decisions about their own lives without interference.	42 (21.6)	58 (29.9)	25 (12.9)	47 (24.2)	22 (11.3)	2.74	1.28
Men are expected to have control over family decisions.	4 (2.1)	10 (5.2)	15 (7.7)	96 (49.5)	69 (35.6)	4.12	0.88
Gender role expectations in my community contribute to conflicts in relationships.	9 (4.6)	15 (7.7)	18 (9.3)	90 (46.4)	62 (32.0)	3.93	1.03
Equal participation of men and women reduces the risk of violence in relationships.	18 (9.3)	27 (13.9)	31 (16.0)	73 (37.6)	45 (23.2)	3.51	1.22
Women who do not conform to expected gender roles are likely to face punishment or violence.	6 (3.1)	12 (6.2)	17 (8.8)	92 (47.4)	67 (34.5)	4.04	0.94
Gender role expectations in my community help prevent gender-based violence.	39 (20.1)	62 (32.0)	24 (12.4)	46 (23.7)	23 (11.9)	2.75	1.27
Composite Mean and Standard Deviation						3.48	1.10

Source: Field Data (2026)

As shown in Table 1, gender role expectations recorded a composite mean of $M = 3.48$ ($SD = 1.10$), indicating an overall agreement that gender role expectations influence gender-based violence among women of reproductive age in Turkana County. However, the item-level findings revealed substantial variation in the extent to which specific expectations were endorsed.

Respondents generally disagreed that men and women were encouraged to share roles and responsibilities equally ($M = 2.66$, $SD = 1.30$). Only 34.0% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, compared with 55.1% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. This suggests that household responsibilities remain strongly differentiated by gender. The qualitative findings reinforced this pattern, with K1 observing that “women are traditionally expected to take care of the home while men are viewed as providers and decision-makers,” while K3 noted that some responsibilities are still regarded as belonging specifically to men or women. These findings are consistent with Enock et al. (2024), who linked rigid gender roles to unequal relationships, and Abdoulaye and Issoufou (2023), who found that unequal gender roles reduce women's bargaining power and increase vulnerability to intimate partner violence.

A stronger expectation concerned women's domestic responsibilities. Respondents strongly agreed that women are expected to prioritize household duties over personal or professional goals ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.91$), with 83.6% agreeing or strongly agreeing. K2 reported that women who prioritize personal interests over family

responsibilities may face community criticism, while K4 indicated that some women sacrifice personal goals to meet expectations concerning husbands and children. This pattern suggests that gender role expectations may constrain women's social and economic autonomy, thereby increasing dependence on male partners. Bih (2025) similarly found that restrictive gender expectations limit women's empowerment, while Moore (2025) associated women's concentration in unpaid domestic roles with reduced autonomy and greater dependence on male partners.

Respondents also disagreed that women were free to make decisions about their own lives without interference ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 1.28$). More than half (51.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating limited perceived autonomy. K1 explained that important decisions are often discussed with husbands or male relatives before women act, while K3 noted that women who make independent decisions may be perceived as challenging traditional expectations. These findings suggest that culturally defined expectations can constrain women's autonomy in areas such as mobility, employment, relationships, and reproductive decisions. Niyonkuru (2021) similarly associated limited female autonomy with increased vulnerability to GBV, while Kung'u and Kamau (2023) found that women's decision-making is shaped by prevailing gender norms and power structures.

The expectation of male control over family decisions received strong endorsement ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.88$), with 85.1% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. K2

described men as commonly regarded as household heads whose decisions guide the family, while K4 observed that women who challenge male decisions may be viewed as disrespectful. The finding indicates that decision-making authority remains strongly associated with men, potentially reinforcing women's dependence and limiting their influence over financial, reproductive, and other household decisions. This is consistent with Enock et al. (2024), who identified unequal decision-making power as a contributor to gender inequality and women's vulnerability to intimate partner violence. Kung'u and Kamau (2023) likewise linked male dominance in household decisions to restricted female autonomy.

Respondents further agreed that gender role expectations contribute to relationship conflicts ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.03$), with 78.4% agreeing or strongly agreeing. Qualitative accounts indicated that conflicts may emerge when women resist traditional responsibilities or when men fail to meet expectations of being providers and household authorities. K1 and K3 both associated marital disagreements with differing expectations regarding the roles of husbands and wives. These findings suggest that rigid expectations may generate interpersonal tensions and, in some circumstances, escalate into violence as a means of enforcing conformity. Mburuki (2026) similarly found that rigid gender expectations contribute to marital disagreements, while Bih (2025) linked unequal gender expectations to power imbalances and increased risk of GBV.

At the same time, respondents agreed that equal participation of men and women can reduce violence in relationships ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.22$). A combined 60.8% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Qualitative findings emphasized that shared decision-making promotes respect and reduces household tension. K4 noted that equal participation in decisions reduces misunderstandings, while K2 emphasized that respect increases when both partners' opinions are valued. This finding indicates that respondents recognized the protective potential of gender-equitable relationships. Kung'u and Kamau (2023) similarly associated gender-equitable relationships with reduced acceptance of violence, while Enock et al. (2024) emphasized shared responsibilities and decision-making as mechanisms for reducing gender inequality.

Importantly, respondents strongly agreed that women who do not conform to expected gender roles are likely to face punishment or violence ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.94$), with 81.9% agreeing or strongly agreeing. K1 reported that women who depart from community expectations may be labelled disrespectful or difficult, while K3 indicated that some women fear rejection, conflict, or violence when

challenging traditional roles. This finding suggests that gender role expectations may operate as mechanisms of social and interpersonal control, with violence potentially used to enforce conformity. Moore (2025) similarly found that restrictive gender expectations expose women who challenge traditional roles to social sanctions and violence, while Niyonkuru (2021) identified GBV as a possible mechanism for enforcing culturally prescribed gender behaviours.

Conversely, respondents disagreed that existing gender role expectations help prevent gender-based violence ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.27$). Only 35.6% agreed or strongly agreed, compared with 52.1% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. The finding suggests that respondents did not generally perceive traditional gender expectations as protective against GBV. Rather, the preceding findings indicate that expectations emphasizing male authority, female domesticity, and conformity may reinforce unequal power relations and increase women's vulnerability to violence. K2 noted that some cultural expectations may promote family stability but do not necessarily address violence, while K4 emphasized the need to change attitudes concerning men's and women's roles to prevent violence.

Findings demonstrate a consistent pattern linking rigid gender role expectations with unequal decision-making, restricted female autonomy, domestic role pressures, relationship conflict, and the potential use of violence to enforce conformity. At the same time, respondents recognized equal participation and shared decision-making as potentially protective. The convergence between the quantitative and qualitative findings therefore suggests that gender role expectations are an important social mechanism through which unequal gender relations may contribute to GBV among women of reproductive age in Turkana County.

Inferential Statistics Findings

Inferential analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between gender role expectations and gender-based violence among women of reproductive age in Turkana County. Quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Version 30. Pearson Product-Moment correlation and simple linear regression analyses were performed at a 5% level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$).

4.4.1 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between gender role expectations and gender-based violence. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation between Gender Role Expectations and Gender-Based Violence

Variables	Gender-Based Violence	Gender Role Expectations
Gender-Based Violence	1.000	.647**
Gender Role Expectations	.647**	1.000

Note: $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed).

The findings revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between gender role expectations and gender-based violence ($r = .647$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that stronger or more restrictive gender role expectations were associated with higher levels of gender-based violence among women of reproductive age. The finding suggests that expectations that reinforce unequal gender roles, male authority, and female subordination may contribute to women's vulnerability to GBV.

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether gender role expectations significantly

predicted gender-based violence among women of reproductive age in Turkana County. The regression model was specified as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \varepsilon$$

where Y represents gender-based violence, X represents gender role expectations, β_0 is the constant, β_1 is the regression coefficient, and ε is the error term.

The results showed that gender role expectations explained 41.9% of the variation in gender-based violence ($R^2 = .419$). This indicates that gender role expectations made a substantial contribution to explaining differences in reported gender-based violence among women of reproductive age. The remaining 58.1% of the variation was attributable to other factors not included in the model.

Table 3: Simple Linear Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square (R^2)	Adjusted R Square
1	.647	.419	.416

Dependent variable: Gender-based violence

Predictor: Gender role expectations

The positive value of $R = .647$ indicates a strong positive association between gender role expectations and gender-based violence. The R^2 value of .419 further indicates that gender role expectations accounted for 41.9% of the observed variation in gender-based violence. These findings demonstrate that higher levels of restrictive gender role expectations were associated with higher levels of gender-based violence.

The regression analysis therefore provided evidence that gender role expectations were an important predictor of gender-based violence among women of reproductive age in Turkana County. The direction of the relationship was positive, indicating that increases in restrictive gender role expectations were associated with increases in gender-based violence.

Hypothesis Testing

The study tested the null hypothesis that gender role expectations have no statistically significant influence on gender-based violence among women of reproductive age in Turkana County, Kenya. Based on the statistically significant regression results ($p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis was rejected. The study therefore established that gender role expectations had a statistically significant influence on gender-based violence among women of reproductive age in Turkana County.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that gender role expectations are a significant determinant of gender-based violence among women of reproductive age in Turkana County. The findings indicate that expectations emphasizing male authority, women's domestic responsibilities, limited female autonomy, and conformity to prescribed gender roles are associated with increased vulnerability to GBV. The strong positive relationship between gender role expectations and GBV ($r = .647$, $p < 0.01$) demonstrates that more restrictive gender expectations are associated with higher levels of violence. Conversely, shared responsibilities, equal participation, and mutual respect were perceived as important in reducing relationship tensions and the risk of violence.

The qualitative findings reinforce this conclusion, with key informants indicating that gender roles remain strongly differentiated within households and communities. Women are often expected to prioritize domestic and caregiving responsibilities, while men are commonly regarded as household providers and decision-makers. Key informants further indicated that women who challenge these expectations may experience criticism, conflict, rejection, or violence. These findings demonstrate that

gender role expectations continue to shape power relations and women's autonomy within intimate and household relationships.

The findings are consistent with Radical Feminist Theory, which links violence against women to unequal power relations and the dominance of men over women. They also support Cultural Theory, which explains how shared beliefs, values, and norms shape gender roles and socially accepted behaviours. In the Turkana context, restrictive expectations may therefore reinforce unequal gender relations and create conditions that facilitate or normalize GBV. However, changing gender expectations may be influenced by broader social and cultural transformations, requiring sustained interventions that promote gender-equitable roles, shared decision-making, mutual respect, and women's autonomy.

5.2 Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Strengthen community-based interventions addressing restrictive gender role expectations.

The Turkana County Government and GBV stakeholders should strengthen and institutionalize community-based interventions that address restrictive gender role expectations and promote equitable relationships between women and men. Community programmes should emphasize shared household responsibilities, joint decision-making, mutual respect, and women's autonomy. These measures would help challenge gender expectations that reinforce unequal power relations and increase women's vulnerability to GBV.

2. Engage community leaders in promoting gender-equitable norms and behaviours.

Community leaders, elders, and local organizations should strengthen gender-transformative community dialogue and sensitization programmes aimed at addressing expectations that associate men with authority and women with submissiveness and domestic responsibilities. Regular community engagement should promote positive and culturally appropriate gender norms while discouraging the use of violence to enforce conformity to prescribed gender roles.

3. Strengthen support and response mechanisms for women experiencing GBV.

Healthcare providers, social service organizations, and other GBV response actors should strengthen screening, counselling, referral, and protection services for women experiencing gender-based violence. Particular attention

should be given to women who face conflict, social sanctions, or violence when challenging restrictive gender expectations. Strengthening these services would improve early identification, access to support, and protection for women at risk of GBV.

4. Promote gender-equitable socialization among adolescents and young adults.

The County Government, education institutions, and community development organizations should incorporate gender-equitable approaches into programmes targeting adolescents and young adults. Such programmes should challenge gender stereotypes and promote shared responsibilities, respectful relationships, and non-violent conflict resolution. Early intervention would help reduce the transmission of restrictive gender expectations across generations.

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