

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PREDICTORS OF ENDORSEMENT OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: WOMEN IN SWAZILAND

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High prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) in the form of wife beating in Swaziland is the backdrop of this study. The purpose is to examine what women think about wife beating under various hypothetical situations and in relation to their social, economic, and demographics background characteristics. Data source was the Swaziland Demographic and Health Survey 2006-07 (SDHS). Women's endorsement of wife beating is the criterion variable. Women's age, education, wealth index, marital status, employment status, place of residence, region, household decision making, and religion are the explanatory variables. A multivariate analysis reveals that women's age, level of education, and geographic region of residence are very important factors in predicting their endorsement of wife beating. To a lesser extent, marital status, employment status, place of residence (rural vs, urban) are partial predictors of women's endorsement of wife beating. The data also show that a substantial number of women support wife beating under various circumstances. Implications for future action in addressing beliefs and support for wife beating invoke programs necessary for mindset modification and working against harmful cultural norms.

Introduction

One of the most common forms of domestic violence is intimate partner violence (IPV) that includes physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, economic or financial abuse, and controlling behaviors of an intimate partner. Intimate partner violence occurs in all settings as well as in all groups, irrespective of their socioeconomic, religious, gender, and cultural backgrounds, but women are overwhelmingly victims of IPV (WHO, 2012).

An aspect of physical abuse is wife beating, which is the focus of the current study. Wife beating is not uncommon in Swaziland just as in other patriarchal and African societies. According to the U.S. Department of State's Report (2011) on Swaziland, domestic violence against women, in particular wife beating, is common and sometimes it leads to the death of the victim.

Swaziland is a small, landlocked country surrounded by South Africa. It is just a little over 17,364 sq. km. in area, slightly smaller than the size of Wales. The population of the country was estimated at 1.33 million people in 2017 (PopulationPyramid.net, 2017).

The Research Problem

Numerous studies (Adika et al, 2013; Akmatov, 2008; Hindin, 2003; Hove, 2011; Jewkes, 2002; Klomegah, 2008; Lawoko, 2008; Ononokpono and Azfredrick, 2014; Simona et al., 2015; Uthman et al, 2009; Yount and Carrera, 2006) have chronicled dimensions of IPV including its determinants, preventive measures, as well as perceptions of both men and women about physical abuse, but little study has been done on Swaziland, where IPV persists at a moderately high level. For example, in an *All Africa* (2015) publication, it was reported that 4 in 10 women believe that a husband is justified to beat his wife, because he is the head of the household. APA news agency quoted Silindela Nkosi (2015), the communication and advocacy officer for Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA), as saying that “these beliefs of justifying abuse have increased to the worst rate resulting in more young women dying in the hands of their lovers or husbands” (*All Africa*, 2015). To substantiate, Malinga (2016) of the *Times of Swaziland* reported on that a teacher who was also a pastor was charged with burnt wife’s murder and in a follow-up report, it was revealed that the teacher’s wife was stabbed and her throat slit (Malinga, 2016). Other forms of domestic violence cases appear frequently in the *Times of Swaziland* that could be a cause for concern. For example, a 5-year girl was raped, poisoned and died, a police officer was indicted for the rape of her 9-year old daughter, and a frustrated 16-year old girl reported to be living in fear of her physically abusive father.

Incidents of domestic and physical abuse of females in the country are rife and warrant further empirical inquiry. Firstly, not many studies have been done on this phenomenon in the country. Secondly, aside from cultural factors mentioned as a precursor of wife beating (*All Africa*, 2015), other associated factors have been left out in previous reports; specifically, the perception of women on wife beating as influenced by their socioeconomic status (SES) and demographic characteristics. This missing link was the task of current research, in the hope that information from the women’s data might be useful to the reading public and produce some programmatic value.

Purpose

This study was done against the backdrop of the 2010 human rights report on

Swaziland (U.S. Department of State, 2011) in which violence against women was cited among other as human rights problems in the country. According to a survey conducted in 2008 by the government's Central Statistics Office, 60% of men believed it was acceptable to beat their wives (U.S. Department of State, 2011). Based on that information, it would be appropriate to estimate the number of women who share likewise beliefs in comparison with the men and perhaps, for future policy considerations toward addressing this problem. The goal was to examine and describe the distribution of women's background characteristics in relation to their opinions on wife beating. The purpose of the paper, therefore, is two-fold: 1) to estimate women's responses that support wife beating under various circumstances and 2) to examine the contextual characteristics of women in relation to their responses.

As a reminder, women are entitled to protection of all human rights in political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any field and that no custom, tradition, or religious consideration should be invoked to avoid people's obligations with respect to elimination of violence against women (United Nations General Assembly, 1993). The significance of this paper is the awareness factor for women as well as efforts toward finding measures to address the problem. As noted by Freeman (2016), this problem of gender-based violence is mainly due to patriarchal nature of society and obnoxious cultural beliefs, which suppress women. These inhumane acts have continued to prevent victims from achieving their maximum potential and have compromised their physical and psychological integrity. Freeman added, it was clear that some victims reconcile with their abusers, some are afraid in the cycle of abuse and yet some die at the hands of their abusive partners. According to Estonovil (2010)¹, women learn to be victims of abuse, just as men learn to inflict them, through the process of socialization. Women's tendency to accept violence is not easy to erase from their minds, but they can learn that they do not have to be victims. The current paper, therefore, examines the social, economic, religious, and demographic factors that associate with Swazi women's opinions about wife beating in reference to the framework described above.

The research questions addressed were: 1) What are the circumstances under which Swazi women would accept wife beating? 2) What is the variation in women's background characteristics and their perception of wife beating? 3) Which characteristics are significant predictors of women's endorsement of wife beating?

Previous Literature

To determine factors associated with variations in normative acceptance

of domestic violence among young people of different sociodemographic backgrounds in South Africa, Thaler (2012) triangulated survey and qualitative interview data in a panel study in Cape Town. Vignette scenarios were presented to respondents and interviewees and then asked whether or not they accepted the use of violence in vignette scenarios. Findings show gender disparity in the approval of husband-on-wife violence with higher percentage of women in favor of all scenarios. A closer look at gender showed that more African women than colored women approved of IPV against women, in all situations presented. Approval of IPV against women was higher among African women than among African men, in general. Approval of IPV was higher for reasons of suspected and/or discovered infidelity than for disobedience or displeasure with food. The most consistent predictor of norms accepting IPV was past experience with violence as a victim, witness, or perpetrator. In view of the findings, Thaler (2012) noted that the acceptance of IPV by women in South Africa reflected a habituation to violence through exposure in their own families. As well, men accept violence due to personal exposure and socialization. The general acceptance of violence reflects the internalization of violent norms in line with social learning theory, with young people learning that violence is an instrument to resolve disputes, assert dominance, and prove manliness. This theory has relevance to current study as an explanatory frame of reference.

Even though Thaler's study included sociodemographic variables, the influence of religious affiliation was not examined. In fact, most previous studies on attitudes of women toward IPV have excluded religion as an explanatory factor, even though theoretically, religion is one of the socialization agencies in society. The current study attempted to fill this gap in the literature because, as noted by Renzetti and others (2014), there was paucity of data on religion and IPV and future research was needed in this area. There are studies that also indicate that religiosity per se is less important in predicting IPV than is style of religious self-regulation (Renzetti et al. 2014).

Koch and Ramirez (2010) examined the relationship between religious behavior, religious belief, and intimate partner violence using survey data gathered from 626 undergraduate students. They found that Christian fundamentalism was positively associated with IPV and approval of IPV, but general religiosity (measured by belief in God, strength of religious faith, church attendance, and frequency of prayer) was not. Similarly, some studies also show a generally favorable influence of religion on IPV (Lehrer et al. 2009). For example, among students in a large public university in Chile, moderate or low levels of religiosity were inversely associated vulnerability to violence, but

high levels were not (Lehrer et al. 2009). The discussion on religion and IPV is ongoing and this was the reason to consider also the influence of religion on the views of women about wife beating in the current study.

In their study of belief systems and IPV in Liberia, Allen and Devitz (2012) observed that there was consistent support for the view that religious beliefs have interacted with cultural belief systems to define gender power relations in society. Beliefs about gender have been consistent predictors of attitudes toward violence against women from many parts of the world. Most respondents (92%) in their study thought women were abused by their husbands, 61% believed men have more power than women because it was God's will, and 50% of them believed it was always like that in their culture. Regardless of this report, the majority of them (60%) were of the opinion that men and women should not be equal, whereas 35% opined equality between men and women in Liberia. Also, respondents believed that to help change marital relations so that women would not be abused, the following measures could be taken: education on gender equality, understanding and accepting "men's ways," economic/financial equality, intervention from religious leaders, intervention from community leaders, education for women on their rights, and intervention from legal system (Allen and Devitz, 2012). Much as Allen and Devitz's sample selection and data collection procedures were well described, information on gender composition was not presented. Notably, the authors suggested further large-scale studies, while gathering demographic data on respondents. Nonetheless, they have explored the various dimensions of IPV in detail and this approach served as a pointer to the current paper and for emulation.

Ross (2012) used an integrative literature review to draw inferences between male patriarchy, Christian scripture, and IPV. He explored the origins of the bible, the role of patriarchy, and the misuse of scripture that sustain IPV and pointed out that relationships between religious practices and IPV were hazy, yielding conflicting findings. For example, Ellison and Anderson (2002) analyzed National Survey of families and Households data and found that high religiosity was inversely associated with spousal abuse. On the other hand, some of the literature suggested that highly religious women (victims of IPV) interpret their victimization as divinely ordained according to the Genesis stories and the creation of the fall (Tkacz, 2006). But in his conclusion, Ross observed that certain sections of the Christian Scripture and their patriarchal and church context were inherently problematic as they can contribute to cultural and individual interpretations that support violence against women. In the same vein, Christian women might endure various forms of abuse (be

it physical, emotional, sexual, or spiritual) but might not regard it as abuse. Ross did not consider whether or not religion impacted women's acceptance of abuse even though they may endure it. However, his paper is significant and important, because it informed the current study in regards to the inclusion of religion as an explanatory variable of women's acceptance of men beating their wives.

To understand women's attitude toward wife beating in Zimbabwe, Hindin (2003) analyzed the 1999 Zimbabwe Demographic Survey data (n=5907) on various sociodemographic variables. The results of six logistic regression models showed associations of many characteristics with women's attitude toward wife beating across different circumstances, but the notable ones were that urban women, women from households with higher levels of wealth, and older women were less likely to believe that wife beating was justified. Also, education was associated with women's attitude toward wife beating. Those with at least primary school education were less likely to believe that wife beating was justified compared with women with no education. Women with higher occupational status were less likely to believe that wife beating was justified compared with unemployed women. Also, employment per se did not matter but the type of employment. Household decision making was constantly associated with attitudes toward wife beating. Women who reported decisions being made jointly with spouse were less likely to believe that wife beating was justified (except if she burned the food) in contrast to women of other decision-making categories. The explanatory factors examined in Hindin's (2003) study are valuable for the current study in that they represent typical socioeconomic characteristics that were used in similar studies and therefore, were incorporated in this study.

Rashid and others (2014) explored socioeconomic factors associated with attitudes toward wife beating among Bangladeshi women, using the sixth Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) data set, which is a counterpart of the Swaziland Demographic and Health Survey data set (SDHS) - used in the current study. A number of background variables were assessed in relation to acceptance of or justification for wife beating under five imaginary situations - if she burns the food, argues with the husband, goes out without telling him, neglects the children, and refuses to have sex with him. The authors used Pearson's chi square and logistic regression in analysis and found out that the most widely accepted reasons for approval of wife beating were, if the wife argued with the husband (23%), if she neglected the children (18%), and if she goes out without telling him (17%). Fewer women thought wife beating was justified, if a wife refused to have sex with the husband (8%)

and, if she burns the food while cooking (4%). Significant variables associated women's attitudes toward wife beating turned out to be wealth index, education, employment status, place of residence, and religion. Women from low income homes and of low or no education tend to approve of wife beating more than their counterparts some specific situations. Also, unemployed women and rural women were more likely than urban and employed women to approve wife beating in some situations. The authors also found out that more Muslim women would approve of wife beating than non-Muslim women. Most of the variables used in Rashid and others' study were incorporated in the current study, because of similarities of the two data sets in terms of their structured and measurement items.

In a study focusing on only men's attitude towards gender-based violence against women in Amarata community of Yenagoa municipality, Bayelsa State, Nigeria, Adika and others (2013) reported that the majority of respondents (54%) preferred men to women in leadership positions as well as refusing equal rights (56%) between men and women in society. The overwhelming majority (86%) also thought it was proper to beat up a wife for different reasons, but mainly because women were weaker sex so they must be controlled (30%) and that women were not as men and did not deserve self-worth as men (34%). The men of Amarata community also revealed that abuse of women took place mostly in the workplace (40%), during family decision making (25%), religious situations (15%), and community social and policy making processes (10%) respectively. Some of the dimensions covered in Amarata community study were replicated in the current study in order to ascertain the variability in Swazi women's responses with that of Nigerian males' responses. In sum, significant predictive factors discovered in the findings of past literature are: age, place of residence, region, employment status, level of education, household decision-making autonomy, and religion.

Theories of Domestic Violence in the African Context

I sampled five categories of theories of domestic violence from Bowman's (2003) writings on domestic violence in the African context that are relevant to this paper. These theories are important explanatory frameworks for understanding the traditional social structure within which African women operate cognitively and behaviorally in reference to IPV.

The first theory, **rights theories**, stipulates that most African countries are signatories to international treaties that consider domestic violence as a violation of individual human rights, but African literary works on domestic violence do not portray it as such. Some writers have noted that until domestic

violence is spelt out explicitly in a language that depicts it as violation of individual human rights and a function of gender inequality, effective remedy will not be achieved (Bowman, 2003).

The second theory is **feminist explanations** of domestic violence, which is frequently written about in African literature. This framework views domestic violence as an offshoot of a much broader context of gender inequality within patriarchal society, where a woman's place is decidedly subordinate. This placement of women remains commonplace in African customary law. Therefore, feminist writers conclude that unless the systematic gender inequality is addressed, gender-based violence will persist.

The third category of theory is **cultural explanations** of domestic violence, which emphasizes the power of tradition and norms within African context. These tradition and norms allow for unequal distribution of power in traditional African marriages, polygyny, male promiscuity, the power of the extended family over the nuclear family, and widespread abuse of wives by their husbands. For example, spousal arguments and disputes, or wife's "talking back" to husband can escalate to violence. That is, the wife's failing to conform to her expected behavior of submissiveness, not to question or argue with husband, and to ask permission for all her activities. In such situations, domestic violence is viewed as enforcing the wife's conformity to the traditional role she is supposed to play and not a violation of her rights. This theory therefore suggests that, in the African context, culture is often an excuse for male violence against women and not the cause of it. On a comparative level, what is considered cultural in Africa could be interpreted differently in Europe or America; for example, the issues of control, and abuse could be related to the batterer's psychological condition rather than cultural issue.

Society in transition explanations is another theory of domestic violence that is represented in African literature. This theory sees violence emerging as traditional cultures transition to modern, urbanized societies, because of men's sense of social change and the associated threat and loss of power that comes alongside.

The fifth theory is **culture of violence explanations**. Some observers associate gender-based violence to an alleged "culture of violence" in modern Africa, in which violence is an acceptable mode of dispute resolution, which is traced back to colonial days – an era rife with mistreatment of Africans by their colonial masters. Thus, gender-based violence is a remnant of repressive practices of colonial powers, in particular, a manifested in Apartheid South Africa, where violence is directed against women, including both rape and domestic violence.

Method

Data and Sample

Data source for the study was Swaziland Demographic and Health Survey 2006-07 (SDHS). The SDHS is a national-level sample survey designed to provide estimates of health and demographic indicators in Swaziland. Data source for the study was Swaziland Demographic and Health Survey 2006-07 (SDHS). The SDHS is a national-level sample survey designed to provide estimates of health and demographic indicators in Swaziland. Exhaustive listings of households were drawn and from these lists, a systematic sample of 5,500 households was drawn. All women and men age 15-49 identified in these households were eligible for individual interview. Five types of questionnaires were used for the SDHS – the Household, Women's, Men's, the Youth, and the Older Adult Questionnaires.

For the purpose of this study, the women's individual recode data file ($n = 4,987$) was used for analysis. The questionnaire for this file collected information on women age 15-49 and covered the following Five types of questionnaires were used for the SDHS – the Household, Women's, Men's, the Youth, and the Older Adult Questionnaires.

For the purpose of this study, the women's individual recode data file ($n = 4,987$) was used for analysis. The questionnaire for this file collected information on women age 15-49 and covered the following topics: background characteristics, birth history, knowledge and use of contraceptive, antenatal and delivery care, infant feeding practices, vaccinations, childhood illness and treatment, marriage and sexual activity, fertility preferences, husband's background and woman's work status, adult (maternal) mortality, HIV/AIDS related knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. The dataset has one record for every eligible woman as defined by the household schedule. The unit of analysis (case) in the selected data file is the woman.

Variables and Measures

Dependent variables. Swaziland Demographic and Health Survey (SDHS) questionnaire included five items that elicited information on women's support of wife beating. Women were asked whether or not they thought wife beating was justified under the following hypothetical scenarios: 1) if she goes out without telling him, 2) if she refuses to have sex with him, 3) if she argues with him, 4) if she neglects the children, and 5) if she burns the food, each with response categories of "yes" and "no." These five items were used to measure women's endorsement of wife beating.

Independent variables. The independent variables associated with the demographic, social, and economic factors were women's age, education, wealth index, marital status, employment status, place of residence, region, household decision-making autonomy, and religion. The 5-year age groups of women in the dataset was re-categorized into < 20 years, 20-29 years, 30-39 years, and \geq 40 years. Women's educational level was categorized into no education, primary, secondary, and higher. Every household was assigned scores for ownership of household assets, such as radio, bicycles, television, materials used for construction of their house, household electrification, type of drinking water, and other toilet facilities. The sum of the scores of all assets in a household generated a wealth index score for the household. These wealth index scores were categorized into socioeconomic quartiles – poorest, poorer, middle, rich, richer, but for the purpose of this paper, these quartiles were recoded into poor, middle, and rich to measure wealth index. An item on marital duration in the dataset was recoded into “never married” and “married” and this was used to measure marital status. Women's employment status was measured by dichotomous attributes of employed and unemployed; so was place of residence, which was urban and rural. There were four regions recorded in the dataset – Hhohho, Manzini, Shiselweni, and Lubombo. To examine the women's household decision-making autonomy, the SDHS (2006-07) elicited information on six types of decisions. They were asked who 1) decided how to spend money, 2) had final say on the woman's own health care, 3) had final say on making large household purchases, 4) had final say on household purchases for daily needs, 5) had final say on visits to family or relatives, and 6) decided what to do with money husband earned. I used the women's responses to those questions as indicators of their decision-making autonomy. There were ten religious categories in the dataset and for convenience sake, these were recoded into a trichotomy – Christian denominations, None, and Other – and were used to measure women's religious affiliation.

Analytic Procedure

First, univariate analysis was conducted to describe the background characteristics of women ($n = 4987$). Next, in a bivariate analysis, Pearson chi-square tests were used to determine the relationship between the independent variables (age, education, wealth index, marital status, employment status, place of residence, region, household decision-making, religion) and the dependent variables (women's endorsement of wife beating). Significant independent variables ($p < 0.05$) were then analyzed further using multivariate logistic regression in order to ascertain their predictive powers. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS software.

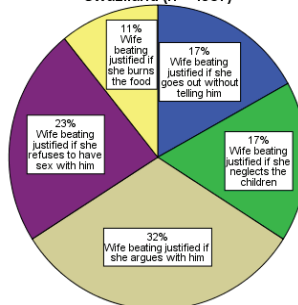
Results

Univariate Analysis

The majority of Swazi women (69%) reside in rural areas in contrast to 31% of them who live in urban areas. There are four regions in Swaziland, which are populated almost proportionately – Hhohho (25.3%), Manzini (29.6%), Shiselweni (21.7%), and Lubombo (23.4%). In reference to women's level of education, most of them (83.8%) have at least primary or secondary education, 8% of them have higher education and 8.2% have no education. Concerning marital status, a little over half of the women (50.2%) were married at the time of the survey. About work status, only 40.8% of the women were working and 59.2% were not. In terms of religious affiliation, most Swazi women (94.3%) belong to various Christian religious denominations, some insignificant numbers in other religions (1.6%), and the rest belong to no religion (4.1%). With regards to women's household decision-making autonomy, the majority of the women have control only in deciding how to spend money (66%) and 57.7% of them have a final say on making household purchases for daily needs. Decisions on other household issues (such as final say on own health, making large household purchases, visits to family or relatives, and deciding what to do with husband's money) are made jointly by women and their spouses/partners or someone else. The data also show that 11.4% of the women earn more than their partners.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of women who agree with wife beating in five different hypothetical situations. The most widely acceptable circumstance under which Swazi women accept wife beating is when the wife argues with her husband (almost 32%), followed by when she refuses to have sex with him (23.4%). Seventeen percent of the women also think that wife beating is justified when a woman neglects the children and if she goes out without informing her husband. Only 10% of the women agree that a husband is justified beating her wife if she burns the food while cooking.

Figure 1. Women's Attitudes toward Wife Beating in Swaziland (n = 4987)



Bivariate Analysis

A chi-square test for independence indicates no significant association between women's decision-making autonomy and their attitudes towards wife beating. All p -values for Pearson chi-square test are larger than .05 as depicted in Table 1. Similarly, religion has no significant association with attitudes toward wife beating except in a situation where the wife burns the food during cooking ($p = .04$), but even that, it is a very weak relationship. Therefore, both variables, household decision making and religion, were excluded from the subsequent multivariate analysis.

Younger women (15 – 19 years old) than older women (20 – 49 years) accept wife beating, particularly when the wife argues with the husband (28.7%) or when she neglects the children (22.4%). Notably, support among all age groups for wife beating is varied according to the specified circumstances. Education has an inverse association with wife beating. More women with less education (primary and secondary) tend to support wife beating under any of the specified circumstances as opposed to women with higher education, who are less represented in support for wife beating under any of the circumstances. Women with no education accept wife beating more than do any of the women with all categories of education. Household wealth index shows a negative association with wife beating. Women from low income households are overrepresented across the various situations for accepting wife beating. Unmarried women support wife beating more than married women, so are unemployed women in contrast to employed women. Almost 21% of rural women think that wife beating by the husband is justified if she argues with him versus 10.4% of the urban women who think likewise. Among the four regions in Swaziland, women in Hhohho support wife beating less and under any circumstance than the other three (Manzini, Shisekweni, Lumbombo). On the other hand, women in Lubombo support wife beating more and under the specified circumstances than the rest.

Overall, the most widely accepted situations for which women support wife beating irrespective of their socioeconomic characteristics are, if the wife argues with her husband and if she neglects the children.

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of Women Who Accept that Husband is Justified in Beating His Wife under Specified Circumstances, by Selected Characteristics of Women in Swaziland (n = 4987)

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i> Goes out without Without telling him, %</i>	<i>Neglects the Argues with children, % him, %</i>	<i>Refuses to have sex with him, %</i>	<i>Burns the food, %</i>	
Age	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>
15 – 19	18.5	22.4	28.7	4.1	5.4
20 – 29	6.9	9.2	15.9	2.7	2.1
30 – 39	5.2	5.3	10.6	2.8	2.2
40 – 49	7.3	6.8	13.2	4.8	2.3
Education	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>
No education	12.8	13.1	25.2	7.7	5.3
Primary	14.1	15.1	24.4	6.1	5.3
Secondary ^{7.3}		10.0	14.2	1.6	1.6
Higher	1.3	1.5	2.3	0.3	0.3
Wealth Index	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .002</i>
Low	13.5	15.6	24.8	5.7	4.0
Medium	11.1	11.3	18.2	3.1	3.2
High	6.2	8.3	12.3	2.1	2.2
Marital status	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .009</i>	<i>p = .293</i>
Not married	11.1	14.8	19.7	2.7	3.3
Married	7.9	7.7	15.4	4.2	2.6
Employment	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .021</i>	<i>p = .009</i>
No	12.0	13.6	19.5	3.7	3.5
Yes	5.9	7.8	14.7	3.1	2.3
Place of Residence	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .028</i>
Urban	5.0	7.1	10.4	2.0	2.1
Rural	11.5	13.1	20.7	4.1	3.4
Region	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>	<i>p = .000</i>
Hhohho	6.3	9.1	12.9	3.1	2.1
Manzini	7.7	9.2	13.3	2.2	2.0
Shiselweni	10.7	11.1	17.5	3.6	3.0
Lubombo	14.2	16.4	27.9	5.2	5.3
Decision making	<i>p = .963</i>	<i>p = .827</i>	<i>p = .806</i>	<i>p = .662</i>	<i>p = .549</i>
Religion	<i>p = .155</i>	<i>p = .274</i>	<i>p = .528</i>	<i>p = .319</i>	<i>p = .047</i>
Christian	9.4	11.3	17.4	3.4	2.9
Other	6.3	6.3	21.7	3.8	1.3
None	12.8	11.8	15.0	4.4	6.4

P-values are from Pearson's chi-square test for independence.

Multivariate Analysis

In a multivariate context, the dependent variable (endorsement wife beating) was regressed on the following predictor (independent) variables: current age of respondents, education in single years, marital status, place of residence, employment status, wealth index, and region to assess the impact of the latter on the former. Since endorsement of wife beating was conceived in five hypothetical scenarios (or situations), the logistic regression was run five times, using each scenario in turn, to produce five models. The results, as shown in Table 2, indicate that wealth index is not a good predictor of attitudes towards wife beating under all circumstances except in a situation where the wife argues with the husband – the odds ratio being .792, which is less than 1 meaning

that women in wealthy homes are less likely than other women to say yes to a husband beating his wife, if she argues with him.

The most important significant predictors of women's attitudes towards wife beating are age and education in that they are statistically significant in reference to all the five scenarios. Both age and education have an inverse relationship with attitudes toward wife beating. That is, as age increases, the odds ratios are less than 1. Older women are less likely to agree that a husband should beat the wife under any circumstance than younger women. Similarly, as number of years of education increase, the odds ratios decrease below 1. Higher educated women are less likely to agree to wife beating under any scenario than less educated and uneducated women.

Marital status is a less important predictor, because it is only significant in two out of the five hypothetical situations – when the wife neglects the children and refuses to have sex with him. Considering the situation where the wife neglects the children, married women are less likely to accept wife beating than unmarried women. On the other hand, in a situation where the wife refuses to have sex with the husband, married women are more likely than unmarried women to agree that the husband beats the wife.

Employment status is also a partial predictor of women's endorsement of wife beating, because it is only significant in two out of the five situations – when she goes out without telling him and when she argues with him. In the first situation, employed women are less likely than unemployed women to say yes to a husband beating the wife. In the second situation, employed women are 1.2 times more likely to agree that the husband can beat the wife.

Place of residence predicts women's endorsement of wife beating only in three situations – if a wife goes out without telling her husband, if she neglects the children, and if she argues with her husband. In a situation where a wife goes out without telling the husband, rural women are 1.7 times more likely to accept the husband beating her than urban women. Rural women are 1.4 times more likely than urban women to accept wife beating, if she neglects the children and also, they are 1.7 times more likely than urban women to accept wife beating, if she argues with her husband.

Region is also a predictor of women's endorsement of wife beating, particularly Lubombo region (by virtue of its highest odds ratios). In a situation where the wife goes out without telling her husband, women in Lubombo are over two times more likely to say yes to the husband beating her than women in other regions. If the wife neglects the children, Lubombo women are 1.7 times more likely to accept the husband beating her than women in other regions. Also, they are 2.3 times more likely to accept a husband beating his

wife, if she argues with him than women from other regions. As well, the odds of Lubombo women accepting a husband beating his wife, if she burns the food is 2.3 more than the rest of women from other women. Overall, the odds of women accepting wife beating under any circumstance are lowest in Hhohho, but increase from Manzini to Shiselweni and highest in Lubombo.

Table 2. Adjusted Odds Ratios from Multiple Logistic Regression Models of Women Who Accept that Husband is Justified in Beating His Wife under Specified Circumstances, by Selected Characteristics of Women in Swaziland (n = 4987)

Characteristics	Goes out without Without telling him B		children	Neglects the him B		Argues with him B		Refuses to have sex with him B		Burns the food B		$\underline{Exp(B)}$
	$Exp(B)$			$Exp(B)$		$Exp(B)$		$Exp(B)$				
Age	-.054	.947*		-.061	.941*	-.059	.942*	-.020	.980*	-.047	.954*	
Education	-.102	.903*		-.093	.911*	-.111	.895*	-.162	.851*	-.157	.855*	
Wealth Index												
Low												
Medium.113	1.120		-.142	.867	-.079	.924	-.270	.763	.175	1.191		
High	-.163	.849		-.249	.779	-.233	.792*	-.301	.740	.060	1.062]	
Marital status												
Not married												
Married	.145	1.156		-.248	.781*	.135	1.144	.415	1.515*	.043	1.044	
Employment												
No												
Yes	-.302	.739*		-.028	.972	.201	1.223*	-.007	.993	-.079	.924	
Place of Residence												
Urban												
Rural	.525	1.690*		.354	1.424*	.539	1.714*	.269	1.308	.197	1.217	
Region												
Hhohho												
Manzini	.277	1.319		.008	1.008	.098	1.103	-.208	.812	.036	1.036	
Shiselweni	.439	1.551*		.056	1.057	.254	1.289*	.115	1.121	.351	1.420	
Lubombo	.783	2.189*		.532	1.702*	.855	2.351*	.263	1.301	.828	2.289*	

* $p < .05$

Discussion and Conclusion

Evidence of pervasive intimate partner violence (IPV) in Swaziland is the impetus behind this paper with the aim of examining women's endorsement of wife beating in that society. This was done within the framework of the United Nations General Assembly's declaration on human rights (as it relates to women) and in reference to Estonovil's (2010) thoughts on the rights of females regarding gender-based violence. The study results show that many Swazi women approve of violence of husbands towards their wives under a variety of circumstances. Almost a third of them (32%) believe that a wife should not argue with her husband and if she does, it is acceptable for the husband to beat her. A substantial percentage of the women (23%) also endorse the idea that a wife can be beaten by the husband, if she refuses to have sex with him. Other conditions for which women endorse wife-beating

by husbands are, if she goes out without telling him (17%), if she neglects the children (17%) and if she burns the food during cooking (11%).

The above-mentioned findings reflect and underscore the traditional mindset and roles of women in African societies as subservient partners in marriages and into which females have been socialized growing up. Gender is a social construct emanating from the process of socialization. Gender roles are structurally and culturally assigned to males and females in ways that create, reinforce, and perpetuate relationships of male dominance and female subordination (*AfroDev*, 2011). The family, as a social institution, is a brewery for the subservience of women because children are socialized from infancy to conform to the acceptable norms of society which includes sexual differentiated roles and differential treatment of the sexes (*AfroDev*, 2011). Thus, children's mindset, outlook, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors are shaped during this socialization process, which become critical in the whole life of the child. As a consequence, women are socialized to acquire those qualities that fit into a relationship of dependence on men, such as gentleness, passivity, submission and striving to please men always. A woman's sexuality is defined for her and she is taught how to use it for the benefit of the male partner (Kambarami, 2006). Furthermore, in most traditional African societies, sexual degradation and exploitation exist. Most people in these societies believe that sexuality equates women. Female sexuality is considered property of men and therefore it is not uncommon to find a man physically abusing his female partner for refusing him sex (Uchem and Ngwa, 2014). When the woman is in marriage, she is expected to satisfy the sexual desires of the husband (Messer, 2004). Therefore, when a husband wants sex, the wife should comply because that is part of the marriage contract (Leclerc-Madlala, 2000).

With such a mindset, it is not unusual to find some women condoning men's abusive behavior towards their wives (as the current study findings have shown), for these women are products of the chauvinist and patriarchal socializing process described above. In effect, they have been socialized into believing that it is wrong to deny sex to their partners, argue with them, go out without telling them, neglecting their children (implying neglecting their maternal roles), and burning the foods (i.e. being negligent in playing their domestic roles). Notably, this explanation is in sync with Thaler's (2012) social learning theory and Bowman's (2003) cultural explanatory framework of domestic violence in Africa discussed earlier in the review of the literature. Thus, the cultural role of women is reiterated – a role which is intertwined with the larger cultural value system, defines both the status and rights of women which, in turn, defines whether a man has the right to abuse and

whether the fault of the abuse is with the victim rather than the offender (Waltermaurer, 2012).

In reference to women's background characteristics that associate with their opinions on wife beating, their ages, educational levels, and the geographic regions in which they live are the most significant predictor factors, all things being equal. These findings corroborate that of Hindin's (2003) from Zimbabwe and Rashid and others' (2014) from Bangladesh in regards to age and education. Just as Hindin reported in his study, older and educated women are less likely to condone wife beating under any circumstance. Also, in both Rashid and other's study and this current study results, education is inversely related to the acceptance of wife beating regardless of the circumstance. Of the third important predictive factor - geographic region - women in Hhohho and Lubombo are poles apart in the attitudes toward wife beating. Lubombo women are more inclined than other women to accept wife beating by their husbands under any of the circumstances, whereas Hhohho women are less likely than the others to accept wife beating regardless of the situation. Women from Manzini and Shiselweni regions have mixed attitudes towards wife beating by husbands. These regions may have differential outlooks and as such influence their women's differential perceptions of wife beating. It turns out that in terms of social development, Hhohho and Manzini have an edge over Shidelweni and Lubombo and their variations reflect their women's attitudes towards wife beating.

Women's marital status is also a context within which attitudes towards wife beating can be understood, but to a lesser extent - only in situations when the wife neglects the children and/or when she refuses to have sex with the husband. In the former situation, married women would less likely than unmarried women to approve of a husband beating his wife, but in the latter situation, they would more likely than unmarried women approve of the husband's abusive action. Employment status is another factor in understanding women's perceptions of wife beating and it also relates to only two scenarios - when a wife goes out without the husband's knowledge and/or when she argues with the husband. In the first context, employed women, unlike unemployed women, would not accept a husband beating the wife, but they would accept wife beating, if the wife argues with the husband, whereas their unemployed counterparts would not. Rural/urban residence is the third partial explanatory factor and, in this context, women in rural Swaziland are more likely than their counterparts in urban areas to accept that husbands beat their wives, if they go out without informing their husbands, if they neglect their children, and if they argue with their husbands. In a nutshell, marital

status, employment status, place of residence (rural vs. urban) are explanatory factors that discriminate among the different reasons for which women would accept wife beating by a husband. That means, these factors are not as good and reliable contexts within which to understand women's perception of wife beating as do a woman's age, her educational level, and the geographic region in which she lives.

Although some previous studies showed association between religion of women and their perception of wife beating (Ammar, 2003, 2007; Rashid et. al, 2014), the current study has shown otherwise. This contradiction may be attributed to the overrepresentation of women in Christian religious denominations and the miniscule insignificant representations in Islam, Other religions, and No religion. Such skewed distribution might have compromised the true relationship between the two factors. As well, making a comparative analysis of religion and women's perception of wife beating in Swaziland versus other cultures are impossible. Future research on this phenomenon in Swaziland should employ qualitative in-depth studies to re-examine religion as it influences women's perception of wife beating. Secondly, I intend to revisit this study and to employ a composite measure (or an index) of the five scenarios to measure women's perception of wife beating. As well, I expect to have access to current dataset.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is, the data were cross-sectional and therefore, causal inference between the explanatory factors and acceptance of wife beating is uncertain. A second limitation is that the frequency distribution of the variable religion is skewed towards one category - Christian denominations (94.4%), - and as a result, the accurate picture of the relationship between religion and attitudes toward wife beating might have been compromised. A third limitation is the dataset used for analysis was over a decade old. That was because at the time of doing the study, no newer SDHS dataset was available.

Implications for Future Action towards Belief in Spousal Abuse

The present study suggests that Swazi women do conform to the social norms that dictate men's powerful positions in marital relations. Understanding women's attitudes toward wife beating are important because they reflect their own expectations and experiences relating to wife beating. Women's attitudes therefore, constitute a marker for social acceptability of wife beating (Hindin, 2003). As noted by Estonovil (2010), women's tendency to accept violence is not easy to erase from their minds, but they can learn that they do not have to

be beaten by their husbands under any pretext. This requires re-socialization or mindset modification for both sexes. Thus, much work needs to be done, in particular, on the sort of programs that can alter beliefs and attitudes as well as programs that can assist both men and women to work against harmful cultural norms. Women need to be presented with alternatives to living in abusive relationships, options to acquire financial, economic, and emotional independence from abusive spouses (Hindin, 2003).

IPV is a worldwide social problem and future efforts aimed at its prevention should consider the contextual understanding of the perceptions of whether or not such a behavior is wrong. Because so long as IPV is viewed by both sexes to be a justifiable behavior, its prevention will continue to be a challenge.

Finally, it is not assumed that women's perceptions and beliefs lead to their abuse; far from that. But social desirability may be a factor in their attitudes in order to conform to the traditional, patriarchal, and chauvinist marital norms. Also, women who subscribe to this belief of wife subordination may be at greater risk of persistent abuse in a relationship than women who do not.

Note

1. Estonovil was a teacher from the American Refugee Committee (ARC), the UNICEF partner that taught Haitian women and girls about their rights with regard to gender-based violence.
2. Marital status is associated with wife beating but not when the wife burns the food while cooking.
3. Household decision making has no association with women's attitude toward wife beating and therefore, information on its attributes have been excluded from the table.
4. Religion is not associated with attitudes towards wife beating except when the wife burns the food while cooking.

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