THE ONE IN THREE, THE THREE IN FOUR: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND WOMEN’S LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Pakistan has one of the lowest women’s labor force participation rates and one of the highest intimate partner violence rates in both South Asia and the World. According to the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) conducted in Pakistan during 2017-18, one in three of ever-married women experienced some form of spousal violence. In the same year, women’s labor force participation nationally stood at 22%. While existing literature has examined the impact of labor force participation on women’s experience of violence, the opposite—the impact of IPV on labor force participation, remains an understudied area. This paper uses the nationally representative DHS 2017-18 to investigate the effect of IPV on women’s employment, theorizing incidence of violence reduces the probability of women being employed in the past 12 months. Study findings indicate that women who ever experienced emotional violence in their lifetime were 3.7 percentage points more likely to be employed in the past 12 months, that there was no significant marginal effect of any IPV as well as both physical and sexual violence on women’s employment, that women that do not justify wife beating are 5.3 percentage points less likely to be employed in the past 12 months, and that the relationship between IPV and women’s employment is moderated by wealth.
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INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is the fifth most populous country with the tenth largest labor force in the world (PES 2022-2023). According to both national and international definitions, labor force participation comprises of people within the working age population\(^a\) that are employed (including self-employed) or actively looking for work (ILO, 2016; DataBank, n.d.; Labour Force Survey 2017-18, 2018). Pakistan has one of the lowest women’s labor force participation (WLFP) rates in both South Asia and the World (World Bank, 2022). Women make up almost half of the population of Pakistan but their participation in the workforce stood at only 22 percent in 2017-18, which means approximately three out of every four women of working age in Pakistan were not employed and not even seeking employment (World Bank, 2024). The situation is worse in Pakistan’s urban areas, where nine out of every ten women did not participate in the labor force (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2018). As figure 1 demonstrates, the gender gap in Pakistan’s labor force participation has not changed in the decade ending 2022.

\(^a\) for Pakistan, this is 15-64 years. See https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_779022.pdf
Several causes have been identified by experts for the lack of women’s participation in the labor force, including socio-cultural norms that dictate women’s place in the household and restrict their mobility and decision making, very low literacy rates, high rates of unemployment, information asymmetry, conflict and political violence, lack of legal and institutional support (such as laws and services), harassment (sexual or otherwise), and poor professional development (Rahman & Radaelli, 2021; Jayachandran, 2019). What is less explored is Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) as a possible additional cause or predictor of women’s poor labor force participation in Pakistan. Research has focused more on “public violence”, such as terrorist attacks, political turmoil, and fragility as determinants of women’s ability to participate in the workforce compared to men\(^b\), but violence that is considered “private” has not been examined as closely. A number of factors contribute to this gap; IPV is highly taboo in several South Asian societies and considered a “family matter”, so it is difficult to report and inquire (Vranda et. al.,

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2018). Women also fear consequences of reporting, including further abuse by partners and losing their children, and therefore both victims and researchers are reluctant to examine the issue (Vranda et. al., 2018; Heron & Eisma, 2021). These challenges, coupled with issues of consent, mean that there are strict guidelines when researching violence against women (WHO & PATH, 2005). However, the USAID-funded Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) have been conducted in Pakistan at four different periods and have a domestic violence module that record information about women’s experience of different types of violence (National Institute of Population Studies & ICF, 2019). The DHS data is nationally representative and internationally recognized. However, it does not calculate women’s labor force participation, instead inquiring about women’s employment status, the nature and extent of their work, their occupation, where the work is done and for whom, if at all (Kishor & Neitzel, 1996). Therefore, this paper investigates the link between IPV and WLFP by answering the question: does intimate partner violence affect the likelihood of women’s past year employment in Pakistan? Women’s employment is both paid and unpaid as well as seasonal and year-round work. The study only explores a subset of WLFP since it does not account for unemployed women or the working age population as the DHS’s domestic violence module only surveys women aged 15-49, or those of reproductive age (National Institute of Population Studies & ICF, 2019). Working within the constraints of the DHS data is necessary as it provides the only nationally representative data on IPV.

This research contributes to the existing literature in two ways; by examining the impact of IPV on WLFP, instead of the more common exploration of WLFP’s impact on IPV; and by using the most recent DHS data for Pakistan. My findings reveal that women who ever
experienced emotional violence in their lifetime were 3.7 percentage points more likely to be employed in the past 12 months as compared to women of the reference category. I do not find a significant marginal effect of any IPV as well as physical and sexual violence both on women’s employment. Group-specific analyses reveal no moderating effect of education levels on the relationship between IPV and women’s employment. However, I find that the relationship between IPV and women’s employment is moderated by wealth, with richer women less likely to be employed in the past 12 months if they experienced violence as compared to poorer women. I also find that women that do not justify wife beating are 5.3 percentage points less likely to be employed in the past 12 months.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. The next section provides further insight into intimate partner violence and its relationship to WLFP in Pakistan including relevant policies and programs. That is followed by a review of the existing literature on IPV, WLFP, and their relationship. I explain my conceptual framework in the section after, followed by my data and methods, descriptive statistics, and then regression results. The paper concludes with the limitations of my work and avenues for further research.

**BACKGROUND**

One in three women aged 15 or older globally have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their life (UN Women, 2018). This figure is likely underestimated as more than 40% of women experiencing violence do not report the crimes or seek help (UNODC, 2020b). In Pakistan, most women experiencing physical or sexual violence do not report it or ever seek help (National Institute of Population Studies & ICF, 2019). Most of the violence they experience is carried out by intimate partners in a romantic relation and is
termed ‘Intimate Partner Violence’ or IPV (UN Women, 2018). A subset of IPV is spousal violence (also called domestic violence), which is various forms of violence carried out by a current or former spouse (National Institute of Population Studies & ICF, 2019). IPV is prevalent across the world, but some regions have a higher rate than others, with South Asia reporting the second highest rate of IPV (WHO, 2018).

Development narratives have focused on the huge costs that IPV incurs not only for the victims and their families but also for the state and society at large; for instance, UN Women estimates $1.5 trillion as the global cost of domestic violence (2016). Preventative action, therefore, produces a collective benefit. A large body of research, such as the World Bank’s 2012 World Development report, presents the “business case for gender equality”, showing that investing in women and girls contributes to economic growth, breaks intergenerational poverty cycles, and improves social mobility for current and future generations.

IPV has been prevalent and critical in Pakistan for several years now. The Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) 2017-18 reports that one in three ever-married women have been subject to violence since age 15 while the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has reported that 90% of Pakistani women have suffered some form of domestic violence (2020b). In 2018, the Thomas Reuters Foundation also ranked Pakistan as the 6th most dangerous country for women globally (Mustafa, 2019). Current husbands are the most reported perpetrators of physical and sexual violence (National Institute of Population Studies & ICF, 2019). Further studies and reports demonstrate these conditions worsened during the pandemic since women were trapped with their abusers and unable to access help due to lockdowns while governments were forced to redirect the already limited resources available for violence
protection services to the pandemic response (UNODC, 2020; Bari, 2020; Quresh, 2020). In the two months ending May 2020 since the lockdown began in March 2020, Pakistani government officials reported a 25% increase in domestic violence incidents in just one province (Punjab) (Bari, 2020). NGOs such as Dastak also reported a notable increase in the calls received on their domestic violence helpline during the lockdown (2020).

Violence can take many forms including physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, financial and mental. All forms of violence are damaging for the victims and often have far-reaching and long-lasting effects. The PDHS survey records women’s experience of various types of violence, revealing that while IPV is prevalent across Pakistan, some regions have higher rates of one type of violence than the other (figure 2):

![Figure 2: Intimate Partner Violence is Prevalent Across Pakistan but Varies by Type. Source: Author’s visualization based on data from the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey, 2017-18](image)

Pakistan has signed the 1995 Beijing Declaration and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on 12 April 1996, with the latest CEDAW report submitted in 2018. The Protection of Women Against Sexual...
Harassment in the Workplace Act was enacted in 2010 and amendments in 2022 extended its jurisdiction beyond formal workplaces (UNWomen & NSCW, 2023). In 2016, Pakistan's parliament unanimously passed a new anti-rape and anti-honour killing bills (Zahra-Malik, 2016). Despite these avenues, implementation of legislation and policies is weak and disclosure can have serious costs. Activists say that measures in the past few years to counter the rise of IPV, such as Punjab’s Women Safety smartphone app, are inadequate and the coronavirus has widened this gap (Bari, 2020). During COVID-19, UNDOC reported on the various ways survivors of violence in Sindh were unable to access support and services like policing and shelter (2020). A development in policy responses to violence against women, which includes DV and IPV, came in 2019 with Pakistan’s top judge Asif Saeed Khosa announcing the establishment of over a thousand courts (in each district) dedicated to tackling violence against women (Mustafa, 2019). These courts will function within existing courthouses but will manage IPV cases separately. A pilot of such a court was launched in 2017 in Punjab but no information on the court’s performance has since been reported (2019).

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Literature on intimate partner violence (IPV) as a policy issue in Pakistan particularly, and South Asia and other lower to middle income countries with similar socio-cultural landscapes generally, has focused on the factors driving IPV and the role of mediating variables (such as education, health, and attitudes towards violence). Research on IPV’s association with women’s labor force participation (LFP) has usually focused on the impact of women’s LFP on the incidence of violence, broadly falling into two theoretical categories: sociological male backlash models and economic bargaining models. Male backlash models predict an increase in
the likelihood of women’s experience of violence (at least in the short-term) when they participate in the labor force as this violates traditional norms and threatens gender roles, such as that of men being traditional breadwinners of the household (John, 2020; Lenze & Klasen, 2017). Other reasons for the rise in violence include a deterioration in women’s health and/or ability as well as increased demands on their time since their care work is now combined with market work. Economic bargaining models, on the other hand, argue that women’s paid work will decrease the likelihood of their experience of IPV as their bargaining power increases and they become ‘economically empowered’ through the earned income (2020; 2017). I also researched more about women’s labor force participation in Pakistan, examining the various factors that drive WLFP, and find that IPV is often not considered a factor in WLFP rates in Pakistan. Literature is also available on the relationship between culture and religion and incidence of IPV, specifically examining stereotypes pertaining to violence amongst Muslims and in Muslim-dominated societies such as Pakistan. This research suggested that people’s faith worsens or improves their experience of violence depending on how culturally tailored IP services are, that IPV prevalence is high in Muslim societies but research reporting these results largely does not employ rigorous methodologies, and that, as in other communities, intersectionality plays a role in experience of violence within Muslim communities. Overall, the review demonstrates the gaps in existing literature pertaining to IPV’s impact on women’s labor force participation in Pakistan.

Factors Explaining and Mediating IPV

Various literature has examined the factors driving IPV. Riger and Stags used the Illinois Families Study to select participants for three rounds of interviews that helped explore the
The relationship between employment and IPV in the context of welfare reform (2004). The study found that effects of IPV on employment are mediated by health; in the short term, women experiencing violence report unstable employment and poor health while in the long term, chronic IPV interferes with women’s ability to sustain employment. Another study published in the Journal of Interpersonal Violence sheds light on the factors driving violence against women, especially attitudes towards violence (Amir-ud-Din & Aziz, 2021). The study uses the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2012-13 to carry out multivariate logit regression analysis with the dependent variable physical violence and the explanatory variable attitudinal acceptance of violence. Research results reveal that having accepting attitudes of violence, childhood experience of violence, education of spouses and some occupation types significantly predicts experience of spousal violence. Attitudes towards violence (such as justifying it) mediate the relationship between violence against women and socioeconomic factors (2021). A study by Iqbal and Fatmi uses the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2012-13 and the Conflicts Tactics Scale (CTS) to examine the prevalence of emotional and physical IPV and its association with potential risk factors (2021). The study reveals that violence of any type was higher in rural than urban areas, and husband’s alcoholism and women’s lower socioeconomic levels were linked to increase risk of violence across provinces (2021).

Another study tests the relationship between women’s education and IPV using the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) Pakistan from 2012-2013 (Khar, 2017). The study finds that education has a negative association with IPV for women having higher education and experiencing less severe forms of violence. Education bears no association with severe incidences of IPV once individual, spousal and household level controls and regional dummies
are accounted for. However, study findings reveal that educated women, across all education levels, demonstrate less favorable attitudes toward IPV and this association is consistent amongst women from different regions and incomes (2017). Another community-based cross-sectional study in rural South India found that illiterate women were at a higher risk of violence than literate women (George et al., 2016) while another study from Karnataka, South India found that education’s association with women’s experience of violence varied by type of abuse (Kundapur et al., 2017). Intergenerational transmission of IPV is another important factor that could influence it (Sohini, 2014), where both men and women witnessing generational violence - such as their fathers beating their mothers – are at increased risk of experiencing IPV as well as perpetrating IPV (Puno, A. et. al, 2023; Bradley & Tanwar, 2022). Moreover, media can play an important role in attitudes towards IPV; results from a randomized control trial in urban in Nigeria found that men exposed to an edutainment TV series were 21 percent less likely to justify forced sex or wife beating than men in the control group (Banerjee et. al, 2019).

Women’s Employment and Violence

A study on how the incidence of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) varies with women’s labor force participation using data from the National Family Health Survey 2015-16, part of the Demographic and Health surveys in India, found that women’s employment is associated with a significantly greater probability of reported spousal violence across all social groups and income levels except the highest (Biswas & Thampi, 2021). The authors employ an intersectional analysis by examining how the relationship between IPV and women’s LFP varies by “class and socio religious identities”, revealing that disadvantaged groups experience greater risk of violence associated with employment (2021). The authors theorize two reasons
for these results; one aligns with the male backlash model, whereby women face violence as backlash for violating socio-cultural norms when they work, while the other posits that women are overburdened by both reproductive and employment work (2021). Another paper examining the relationship between domestic violence and women’s employment in India theorizes that increased participation in the labor force leads to decreased domestic violence experienced by the employed women (Sohini, 2014). Using the National Family Health Survey Data III (2005–06), the authors find the opposite result; that employed women experience more intimate partner violence, again explaining that women’s employment is perceived as a violation of gender norms that lead to the increased violence (2014). Another study published in Partner Abuse examines the relationship between IPV and women on welfare, theorizing that IPV has effects on women leaving welfare for employment (VandeWeerd et. al, 2011). The authors use a sample of 411 women in Florida who were part of 2000–2002 Work and Gain Economic Self-Sufficiency (WAGES) program and quantitative telephonic interviews. They find experience of IPV before the past 12 months by women receiving welfare and currently in a relationship predicts employment success, worse mental health, and lower parenting stress outcomes among welfare-recipient women (2011). Another study using survey data collected from the seven districts of Nepal explored the relationship between different types of violence (physical, emotional and sexual) and three independent variables: women’s work, their economic contribution to family income (if any), and the husband’s witnessing of his father beating his mother during childhood (if at all) (Bradley & Tanwar, 2022). The authors used ordinary least squares (OLS) multiple regression and controlled for socio-economic, household, individual and spouse characteristics. They did not find enough evidence that women’s paid work impacted
their likelihood of experiencing violence (2022). They did find that women’s economic contribution to family income and husband’s witnessing of IPV during childhood significantly increases all forms of IPV for the women (2022).

A separate study using multivariate probit regressions to analyze survey data from 937 randomly selected women members of cooperative societies in the seven districts of Nepal found that participation in employment had a statistically significant positive marginal effect on sexual violence (John, 2020). A study in Jordan using the data collected for Monitoring and Evaluation to Assess and Use Results of the DHS found that women’s paid work increases the likelihood of spousal violence by 7.6 percent, holding other factors in the model constant and when endogeneity of women’s work status is not accounted for (Lenze & Klasen, 2017). When controlled for endogeneity, the authors cannot find a significant relation between women’s work status and marital violence (2017). Another study using data from semi-structured interviews with women market traders in Tanzania tested the economic bargaining model, finding that women’s access to money resulted in a positive effect on their lives and mitigated violence triggered by negotiating money from men (Vyas et al, 2015).

**IPV and Culture and Religion**

There are perceptions in some academic paradigms that IPV is more common in Muslim societies due to religious or cultural norms. Scholarly response, mainly from Muslim communities, advocates the need for “culturally relevant epistemological frameworks” to understand the self (Chowdhury, 2023). One study used a phenomenological approach to understand the lived experience of ten Muslim Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) survivors and nine professionals that provide supportive services in the UK in order to examine the
nature, incidence, and effect of DVA within Muslim religious communities (Chowdhury, 2023). The study revealed that “holistic approaches to faith” allowed it to emerge as an “empowering resource for DVA survivors” whereas “reductionist and androcentric approaches” resulted in perpetuating DVA and abusive structures, concluding that DVA service provision needs to be tailored and culturally relevant to support Muslim clients. A review of 35 empirical studies focused on IPV in Muslim communities in the US and globally found high prevalence levels of IPV among Muslims living in these areas, but, except for a few, most studies did not use rigorous methodologies, which limits their generalizability (Nedegaard, 2014). Experiences of violence in Muslim communities are also intersectional: results from a demographic questionnaire conducted among Canadian Muslim women found that immigrant Muslim women were more likely to be affected by IPV and experienced greater consequences associated to IPV as compared to Canadian-born Muslim women (Alghamdi et. al, 2021).

**WLFP in Pakistan**

The Asian Development Bank reports that although Pakistan’s WLFP grew in the last two decades with income, it is far lower than other countries of similar income levels. Even among highly educated women, labor force participation remains low, with about 25% of Pakistani women holding a university degree being employed. The low WLFP signifies a crucial loss of potential productivity and implications for women’s empowerment as working women are more likely to contribute to household decision-making compared to their non-working counterparts within the same community. A primary reason for lack of employment is mobility challenges, particularly concerning paid work. These issues stem from societal restrictions on women’s mobility and work, inadequate and unsafe public transportation, and
prevalent harassment. Nearly 40% of non-working women cite male family members’ opposition to their employment outside the home as the main reason for not working, while 15% attribute it to their own preference not to work outside the home. However, DHS 2005-2006 revealed that a quarter of the surveyed women expressed willingness to work if they could find a job, with the proportion largely unchanged across rural and urban areas and in the most socially conservative provinces (National Institute of Population Studies, 2008). Some forms of work by Pakistani women may be underestimated in surveys, as a considerable portion may be engaged in agriculture or informal home-based activities, which are not recognized as formal employment. However, analysis of the 2007 Pakistan Time Use Survey suggests this is not a significant driver of WLFP patterns. Gender norms continue to drive WLFP, with occupations and wages differentiated by gender, and women’s work – especially outside the household – still stigmatized (National Institute of Population Studies, 2008)

The literature review demonstrates three gaps. First, when examining the relationship between IPV and WLFP, research focuses mainly on the effect of WLFP on IPV. Second, in the research on determinants of WLFP that I perused, IPV is often not included as a factor. Finally, to the best of my knowledge, research on this topic, within Pakistan, using the relatively recent DHS 2017-18, has not been conducted. Thus, this study contributes to the literature in these three ways: by examining the effect of IPV on WLFP, providing evidence on whether IPV is a determinant of WLFP in Pakistan, and using the most recent DHS data to conduct this analysis.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research investigates the relationship between intimate partner violence (IPV) and women’s work, which is a component of women’s labor force participation (WLFP). I
hypothesize that experiencing partner’s violence negatively influences labor force participation (through employment) amongst ever-married women. As WLFP is determined by various factors, I hypothesize that the impact of IPV will not be large and possibly moderated by other salient variables (such as respondent’s education or wealth). I use the ecological model of violence against women developed by Lori Heise to conceptualize the relationship between IPV and WLFP (1998). Heise developed the model in response to other theoretical frameworks in fields such as Psychology and Sociology that had begun to recognize violence against women as an issue but did not sufficiently capture the gender inequities and power differentials in its etiology. The ecological model constitutes four levels of analysis visualized as four concentric circles, involving personal history (individual), micro system, exo-system, and macro system
factors in which IPV operates and interacts⁶. This multidimensional approach was first used in research on child abuse and neglect (Heise, 1998). I adapt this approach to the DHS data and simplify it into three levels: individual, household, and societal. Figure 3 visualizes my approach.

I am conceptualizing IPV and WFLP as issues of gender equality (Kabeer, 2005) that both operate in these three levels and are influenced by the factors at each level. Factors affecting WLFP, such as asset ownership or type of resident, can be categorized into these three levels as well (Amir et. al, 2018; Lari et. al, 2022). Heise’s model also involves the mesosystem, an “additional layer that represents the interplay between various aspects of a person’s social environment” or the linkages between the four layers (1998). In figure 3, these

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¹ In Heise’s model, micro-system or situational factors comprise interactions that a person is directly involved in (for instance, family members) and what shapes those interactions (such as their control of wealth, alcohol use, etc.). Exo-system factors are big-picture changes, such as unemployment or GDP growth. Macro-system factors are cultural values that underlie the other layers, such as male entitlement or frigid gender roles (1998).
are represented by the arrows in blue. I only study the relations denoted by the arrows in red, with the relation of interest being IPV’s impact on WLFP, if any, and the factors in these three levels, which influence the relation of interest, serving as controls.

Individual level factors are those pertaining to the individual themselves, such as their education level, their age, ownership of assets, etc. Household factors are related to other household members and to the home or ‘private’ environment women operate in, such as partner’s education or time spent in domestic work. Finally, factors at the societal level are characteristics that operate beyond the individual and household and influence women’s experience of both violence and labor force participation, such as province, area of residence (rural/urban), public infrastructure, etc. As mentioned, these categories are not as neat and definitive as presented here; factors overlap across each level and have a constant interplay. For instance, women’s education level can be influenced by both their parent’s income (household factor), and public expenditure on education (societal factor).

At the individual level, WLFP is affected by education, work experience, access to the job market (which can be proxied by access to the internet and news media), disability, health, marital status, individual adherence to social and gender norms (proxied by attitudes towards wife beating), fertility and early marriage (Amir et. al, 2018; Lari et. al, 2022). These factors are prerequisites to finding and securing employment and also influence the type of employment found in many cases. For example, with better education or higher work experience, women can secure higher paying jobs (Amir et. al, 2018). Job market access can improve women’s job matching experience. Fertility, marital status, early marriage, or adherence to social norms can affect ability to seek, secure and/or maintain employment; for instance, some research shows
women’s LFP decreases with each additional child (Bloom et. al., 2007). Social norms can determine women’s inclination to seek and/or maintain employment (Amir-ud-Din, Fatima & Aziz, 2021). They can also affect household facilitation or opposition to women’s work.

At the household level, WLFP is affected by domestic work (proxied by time spent on any domestic work), parents’ education, parents’ income, spouses’ education, spouses’ income, and household decision maker in terms of finances (Lari et al., 2022). Parent or spousal controls are important as they often serve as household heads and/or influence women’s access to education and the job market itself (2022). The PDHS does not have information on the parent-related controls, but information on partner and household head-related controls is available.

Finally, at the societal level, women’s LFP is affected by race, ethnicity, geography (provinces), region (urban or rural), availability and implementation of social, civil and economic laws (including labor and gender-based violence related laws), availability of functional public infrastructure (including public transport, public schools, and public hospitals), population size, GDP, external shocks (such as conflict, pandemic, natural disaster, etc.), fertility rates, percentage of population that is female and child marriage rates.

I envision the relation between IPV and WLFP operating at these three levels as follows. At the individual level, a woman leaves, never joins, or ceases to seek employment because of violence. At the household level, incidence(s) of violence may lead household members to force or convince women to leave, never join or cease to seek employment. At the societal level, violence can arise, continue, or never cease because of societal factors (such as lack of services or social norms), which in turn can influence individual and household factors and affect women’s willingness and/or ability to work. Incidence of violence is also not linear; there is no
certainty or pattern that determines employment occurs first, and then violence, or vice versa; violence is likely to be continuous and cyclical (Snyder, 2019). Despite temporal constraints (John, 2020), we can examine the relationship between IPV and WLFP using these controls. I theorize that experience of IPV is an explanation or predictor of WLFP through women’s employment status, with women experiencing IPV less likely to work in the past 12 months. Women experiencing IPV may decide to leave, cease to seek, or never join employment because it makes employment difficult due to poor physical, mental and/or emotional health (Riger & Stagg, 2004). Women may also make these decisions to mitigate violence, especially if the violence arises due to employment itself (Biswas & Thampi, 2021). By understanding the effect of intimate partner violence on women’s labor force participation, if any, policy makers will be better equipped to address both IPV and WLFP and locate their relationship in broader understandings of gender equality and women’s empowerment.

**DATA AND METHODS**

As discussed, this paper focuses on the effect of emotional, sexual, and physical violence by male intimate partners on women’s employment. I use the DHS Pakistan 2017-18 which is part of the DHS international series of surveys that collect information on variables related to maternal and child health, fertility, mortality, nutrition, disability, migration, women’s empowerment and domestic violence. It is conducted by National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS) Pakistan with support from ICF, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (government entity) and USAID. It captures detailed data on perceptions and incidence of various forms of violence experienced by ever-married women, with some questions on violence experienced by men as well. The survey follows 16,240 households selected from each of the four provinces, the
capital territories and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) Regions. It is nationally represented for these regions and separately for the AJK and GB Regions. Within the survey, a total of 15,930 divorced, widowed, separated or married women aged 15-49 were selected from each of the provinces, capital territories and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) regions to participate in the survey, with a total of 4,085 selected and interviewed for the domestic violence module. 3,303 of these selected women were in Pakistan, 500 women in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and 282 women in Gilgit Baltistan. The survey followed the World Health Organization’s guidelines on ethical collection of information on domestic violence, with only “one eligible woman per household randomly selected to be interviewed, and the module was not to be administered if privacy could not be maintained” (National Institute of Population Studies & ICF, 2019). The domestic violence module collected information on physical, sexual and emotional violence perpetrated by husbands or partners with whom the women are currently living or formerly lived in a union. All of these categories constitute Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), which is the independent variable while women’s employment, a component of their labor force participation, is the dependent variable. While the PDHS 2017-18 uses the term domestic violence, I refer to it as IPV since the survey questions inquire about violence enacted by husband or partner. Another reasoning for using this terminology is the various harms of referring violence experienced in the home as ‘domestic’ (Snyder, R.L, 2019).

The independent variable is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if respondent (ever-married women) reported experiencing physical, emotional or sexual violence by their husband/partner, and 0 otherwise. It is created by combining the three variables on physical,
sexual and emotional violence (which are in turn based on survey questions for various forms of violence). The women’s employment variable is a binary variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent worked in the past 12 months and 0 if not. Work constitutes paid and unpaid employment as well as self or seasonal employment. As discussed in the conceptual framework, I include various controls at the individual, household and societal level, including demographic characteristics (age, region, income level, education level, ethnicity, family size, religion, assets, etc.) as well as spouse’s education, access to facilities, access to bank accounts or mobile phones, and perceptions about spousal violence.

Given both key variables are binary, I estimate a multivariate logistic regression to assess the relationship between IPV and women’s employment with the aforementioned controls. I also include three interaction terms, constructing the model:

\[
Emp_{PastYr} = \beta_0 + \beta_{1\text{dv}_\text{prtnr}_\text{phy}_\text{sex}_\text{emot}_\text{any}} + \beta_{2\text{seduc}} + \beta_{3\text{resp}_\text{age}} + \beta_{4\text{agesq}} + \beta_{5\text{children}} + \\
\beta_{6\text{own_mobile}} + \beta_{7\text{own_bank}} + \beta_{8\text{own_house}} + \beta_{9\text{own_land}} + \beta_{10\text{attitudes_beating}} + \beta_{11\text{media_access}} + \\
\beta_{12\text{watersource_time}} + \beta_{13\text{we_decide_all}} + \beta_{14\text{partner_age}} + \beta_{15\text{speduc}} + \beta_{16\text{partner_alcohol}} + \beta_{17\text{father_viol}} + \\
\beta_{18\text{wealth_index}} + \beta_{19\text{urban}} + \beta_{20\text{provinces}} + \beta_{21\text{dv}_\text{prtnr}_\text{phy}_\text{sex}_\text{emot}_\text{any}*\text{attitudes_beating}} + \\
\beta_{22\text{dv}_\text{prtnr}_\text{phy}_\text{sex}_\text{emot}_\text{any}*\text{seduc}} + \beta_{22\text{dv}_\text{prtnr}_\text{phy}_\text{sex}_\text{emot}_\text{any}*\text{wealth_index} + \text{fe}
\]

Some important control variables unavailable in the data include number of years of work experience, ethnicity, religion, mobility, parent-related controls, and race.
Table 1: Description of Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent Variable</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emp_PastYear</strong></td>
<td>Binary variable that codes respondent’s employment status in the past year as “no” (0) or “yes” (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Variable</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dv_prtnr_phy_sex_emot_any</strong></td>
<td>A binary variable that combines variables on physical, sexual and emotional violence. Equals to 1 if violence experienced, 0 otherwise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seduc</strong></td>
<td>Categorical variable that codes respondent’s educational level as “no education” (0), “primary” (1), “middle” (2), “secondary” (3) and “higher” (4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resp_age</strong></td>
<td>Numeric variable coding respondent’s current age, ranging from 15-49.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children</strong></td>
<td>Categorical variable that measures the respondent’s number of children born, equaling (0) &quot;no children&quot;, (1) &quot;between one to four children&quot;, (2) &quot;between 5 to 7 children&quot;, or (3) &quot;over 8 children&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Own_bank</strong></td>
<td>Binary variable equal to 1 if the respondent has an account in a bank or other financial institution and 0 otherwise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Own_mobile</strong></td>
<td>Binary variable equal to 1 if the respondent owns a mobile phone and 0 otherwise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Own_house</strong></td>
<td>Binary variable equal to 1 if the respondent owns a house phone and 0 otherwise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Own_land</strong></td>
<td>Binary variable equal to 1 if the respondent owns land and 0 otherwise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Attitudes_beating**             | Categorical variable that combines “beating justified”

\[d\] Variables that measure people’s attitudes towards wife beating. Respondents are asked if beating is justified if wife: a) goes out without telling husband, b) neglects children, c) argues with husband, d) refuses to have sex with husband and/or e) burns the food.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Media_access</strong></th>
<th>Binary variable that codes respondent’s use of internet, newspaper, television and radio as “never” (0) or “some or frequent use” (1).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Watersource_time</strong></td>
<td>Categorical variable that codes time taken for respondent to get to a watersource as 0 &quot;no time/on premises&quot;, 1 &quot;less than 10 minutes&quot;, 2 &quot;between 10 to 28 minutes&quot;, 3 &quot;between half an hour to an hour&quot; or 4 &quot;over an hour&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>We_decide_all</strong></td>
<td>Binary variable that reports respondent’s decision making power by combining variables on decision making power for own health care, visit to family and relatives, and large household purchases. Coded as 1 if the respondent decides on any of these alone or jointly with partner, 0 otherwise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Household Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Partner_age</strong></th>
<th>Husband/partner age ranging from 15 to 84.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speduc</strong></td>
<td>Categorical variable that codes respondent’s educational attainment as “no education” (0), “primary” (1), “middle” (2), “secondary” (3), and (4) “higher”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partner_alcohol</strong></td>
<td>Binary variables that reports whether respondent’s partner consumes alcohol. 1 if yes, 0 if not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Father_viol</strong></td>
<td>Categorical variable that reports answers to “respondent’s father ever beat her mother”, coded as 0 &quot;no&quot;, 1 &quot;yes&quot; and 2 &quot;don't know&quot;.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Societal Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Province</strong></th>
<th>Categorical variable that codes Pakistan’s four provinces and four federal areas (from 1 to 8).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wealth_index</strong></td>
<td>Categorical variable with five categories of wealth level (from poorest to richest).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban</strong></td>
<td>Binary variable for urban (1) or rural (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Summary statistics of the key variables and relevant controls relay important information about the sample. Approximately 37% of the women in the domestic violence module report experiencing physical, emotional or sexual IPV. A majority of these women (~60%) have no education and between one to four children, which aligns with the 6.6-member average household size in Pakistan (National Institute of Population Studies & ICF, 2019). Of the women that reported experiencing violence, majority (~13%) lived in rural Punjab. Only 16% of sample women that experienced violence were employed in the past year, with the proportion essentially unchanged for those who did not experience violence. The average age of women in our sample is 33 years, whereas the average age of their partners is 38 years.

A majority of the respondents’ partners have no education, followed by higher education. Only 4% of the partners consume alcohol (which is banned in Pakistan) and this proportion rises to ~9% for respondents’ that experience IPV. A majority of the sample women had water sources on their premises or did not spend time to get to water source. Women in the “poorer” wealth quintile reported experiencing violence the most, followed by those in the “poorest” wealth quintile. Most women that reported experiencing violence also justified wife beating. These statistics help establish correlations and drive the group specific analysis that I will conduct in the next section.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment (past 12 months)</td>
<td>0.157</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence experienced</td>
<td>0.368</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent's education</td>
<td>1.243</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.531</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24
<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent's age</td>
<td>32.955</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>8.136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of children ever born</td>
<td>1.298</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owns a Mobile Phone</td>
<td>0.457</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has Account in Bank/FI</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owns land</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owns house</td>
<td>0.040</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes towards wife beating</td>
<td>0.528</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent’s Access to Media</td>
<td>0.654</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.476</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Household Level**

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time to get to water source</td>
<td>0.648</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Domestic care burden)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband/Partner's age</td>
<td>38.286</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>9.662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband/Partner's education</td>
<td>1.985</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband/Partner’s consumption of alcohol</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent’s father beat her beat</td>
<td>0.395</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth index</td>
<td>2.943</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>0.478</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province</td>
<td>3.627</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=3846</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESULTS**

Table 2 presents the Average Marginal Effects (AMEs) results from the multivariate logit regression. Model 1 summarizes results from the AMEs of the logit regression for any type of violence experienced (a combination of physical, sexual or emotional violence), which is the most reported type of violence by my sample women. Model 2 summarizes AMEs from the logit regression with emotional violence as the key independent variable, which is second most reported violence in the sample. Model 3 has physical and sexual violence as the independent variable; this combination represents the violence coded as more severe in the DHS dataset.
Model 4 presents results from the group specific analysis with interaction terms; these will be discussed in the sub-section “intersectionality and group specific analysis”. Some controls are not shown in Table 2 in the interest of brevity; these include the square of the age variable, which aimed to control for the phenomenon of age or that the effect of age on the IPV-women’s employment relation varies over time. The age-squared variable was insignificant and had no effect in any of the models. Another control that is not shown is the respondent’s access to media (a proxy for job market access), which also had very low magnitude and no significance.

**Main Regression Results**

I did not find a relationship between IPV and women’s employment in Models 1 and 3, which show a small, positive but insignificant effect of the respective types of violence on women’s employment in the past 12 months. The magnitude and direction of the coefficient means that compared to the reference category of women, experiencing any violence (model 1) or physical and sexual violence both (model 3) over a lifetime predicts an increase in women’s employment. However, the coefficients for the IPV variable are not significant at the 1, 5 or 10 percent levels, which means that we do not have enough evidence to claim a relationship between IPV and women’s employment or, in other words, we do not find an effect of IPV on women’s employment. The reference category is married women from Punjab that have no education, belong to the poorest wealth quintile, justify wife beating, have over eight children, spend over an hour to get to their water source, have partners that have no education and reported their fathers beat their mothers. However, model 2 shows that women who ever experienced emotional violence were 3.7 percentage points more likely to be employed in the past 12 months as compared to women of the reference category.
Table 3: Logistic Regression Average Marginal Effect Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable: Women's Labor Force Participation</th>
<th>(1) Experienced Any Intimate Partner Violence</th>
<th>(2) Any emotional violence by partner</th>
<th>(3) Any physical &amp; sexual violence by partner</th>
<th>(4) (1) any violence with Interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intimate Partner Violence</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.037 *</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>0.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.020)</td>
<td>(0.021)</td>
<td>(0.051)</td>
<td>(0.021)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Individual Level Controls**

- **Woman's educational level**
  - *Primary*:
    - 0.009
    - (0.027)
  - *Middle*:
    - 0.009
    - (0.051)
  - *Secondary*:
    - 0.016
    - (0.052)
  - *Higher*:
    - 0.093 **
    - (0.047)

- **Respondent's age**
  - 0.018 **
  - (0.009)

- **Total children ever born**
  - *no children*:
    - 0.073 *
    - (0.044)
  - *between one to four children*:
    - 0.012
    - (0.032)
  - *between 5 to 7 children*:
    - 0.007
    - (0.033)

- **Owns a mobile telephone**
  - -0.022
  - (0.025)

- **Has an account in a bank or other financial institution**
  - 0.212 ***
  - (0.037)
# Ownership of land

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coef 1</th>
<th>Coef 2</th>
<th>Coef 3</th>
<th>Coef 4</th>
<th>Coef 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.027)</td>
<td>(0.027)</td>
<td>(0.027)</td>
<td>(0.026)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Respondent’s attitudes towards wife beating

- **no, not justified**
  - Coef 1: -0.055 ***
  - Coef 2: -0.054 ***
  - Coef 3: -0.054 ***
  - Coef 4: -0.053 ***
  - Coef 5:        
  - (0.020)        
  - (0.020)        
  - (0.020)        
  - (0.019)        

- **don’t know**
  - Coef 1: 0.047
  - Coef 2: 0.048
  - Coef 3: 0.048
  - Coef 4: 0.044
  - Coef 5:        
  - (0.054)        
  - (0.053)        
  - (0.055)        
  - (0.054)        

# Decides on all three: health, purchases, & visits alone or jointly

- Coef 1: 0.017
- Coef 2: 0.017
- Coef 3: 0.018
- Coef 4: 0.017
- Coef 5:        
- (0.019)        
- (0.019)        
- (0.019)        
- (0.019)        

## Household Level Controls

### Time to get to a water source

- **no time/on premises**
  - Coef 1: -0.045
  - Coef 2: -0.037
  - Coef 3: -0.043
  - Coef 4: -0.069
  - Coef 5:        
  - (0.075)        
  - (0.073)        
  - (0.071)        
  - (0.078)        

- **less than 10 minutes**
  - Coef 1: -0.028
  - Coef 2: -0.021
  - Coef 3: -0.024
  - Coef 4: -0.050
  - Coef 5:        
  - (0.091)        
  - (0.090)        
  - (0.088)        
  - (0.094)        

- **between 10 to 28 minutes**
  - Coef 1: -0.066
  - Coef 2: -0.058
  - Coef 3: -0.063
  - Coef 4: -0.087
  - Coef 5:        
  - (0.076)        
  - (0.075)        
  - (0.072)        
  - (0.079)        

- **between half an hour to an hour**
  - Coef 1: -0.117
  - Coef 2: -0.109
  - Coef 3: -0.115
  - Coef 4: -0.138 *
  - Coef 5:        
  - (0.077)        
  - (0.075)        
  - (0.073)        
  - (0.080)        

### Husband/partner's age

- Coef 1: -0.002
- Coef 2: -0.002
- Coef 3: -0.002
- Coef 4: -0.002
- Coef 5:        
- (0.002)        
- (0.002)        
- (0.002)        
- (0.002)        

### Husband/partner's education level

- **Primary**
  - Coef 1: 0.030
  - Coef 2: 0.030
  - Coef 3: 0.031
  - Coef 4: 0.023
  - Coef 5:        
  - (0.035)        
  - (0.036)        
  - (0.035)        
  - (0.034)        

- **Middle**
  - Coef 1: -0.056
  - Coef 2: -0.058
  - Coef 3: -0.054
  - Coef 4: -0.051
  - Coef 5:        
  - (0.040)        
  - (0.039)        
  - (0.040)        
  - (0.039)        

- **Secondary**
  - Coef 1: -0.100 ***
  - Coef 2: -0.100 ***
  - Coef 3: -0.099 ***
  - Coef 4: -0.097 ***
  - Coef 5:        
  - (0.030)        
  - (0.030)        
  - (0.030)        
  - (0.030)        

- **Higher**
  - Coef 1: -0.077 **
  - Coef 2: -0.077 **
  - Coef 3: -0.075 **
  - Coef 4: -0.073 **
  - Coef 5:        
  - (0.035)        
  - (0.035)        
  - (0.035)        
  - (0.034)        

### Husband/partner drinks alcohol

- Coef 1: 0.013
- Coef 2: 0.006
- Coef 3: 0.010
- Coef 4: 0.022
- Coef 5:        
- (0.035)        
- (0.035)        
- (0.035)        
- (0.034)
Respondent's father ever beat her mother

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(0.048)</th>
<th>(0.048)</th>
<th>(0.049)</th>
<th>(0.046)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
<td>-0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.026)</td>
<td>(0.026)</td>
<td>(0.026)</td>
<td>(0.025)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don't know</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td>-0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.036)</td>
<td>(0.036)</td>
<td>(0.036)</td>
<td>(0.036)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wealth index combined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(0.040)</th>
<th>(0.040)</th>
<th>(0.040)</th>
<th>(0.039)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poorer</td>
<td>-0.087</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>-0.087</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.043)</td>
<td>(0.043)</td>
<td>(0.043)</td>
<td>(0.042)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>-0.159</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>-0.157</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.042)</td>
<td>(0.042)</td>
<td>(0.042)</td>
<td>(0.041)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richer</td>
<td>-0.281</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>-0.279</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.051)</td>
<td>(0.050)</td>
<td>(0.050)</td>
<td>(0.048)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richest</td>
<td>-0.253</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>-0.250</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.051)</td>
<td>(0.050)</td>
<td>(0.050)</td>
<td>(0.048)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Societal Level Controls

Respondent lives in urban area or not

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(0.022)</th>
<th>(0.022)</th>
<th>(0.022)</th>
<th>(0.022)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>-0.032</td>
<td>-0.030</td>
<td>-0.034</td>
<td>-0.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.029)</td>
<td>(0.030)</td>
<td>(0.029)</td>
<td>(0.029)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kpk</td>
<td>-0.174</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>-0.178</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.029)</td>
<td>(0.028)</td>
<td>(0.029)</td>
<td>(0.029)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balochistan</td>
<td>-0.136</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>-0.136</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.037)</td>
<td>(0.037)</td>
<td>(0.038)</td>
<td>(0.036)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>-0.004</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td>-0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.040)</td>
<td>(0.040)</td>
<td>(0.040)</td>
<td>(0.041)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fata</td>
<td>-0.235</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>-0.237</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
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<td>(0.020)</td>
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Number of observations

|          | 3110  | 3110  | 3110  | 3110  |

*** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p<.1

1 Estimate of the average marginal effect of women’s education and attitudes toward wife beating.
A number of factors can explain these results. Firstly, as the literature on male backlash models demonstrated, it is not surprising that women that experience violence are more likely to be employed; they may seek to spend less time in the household with their abusive partners and/or they are experiencing violence due to the employment itself. However, if this were the case, we would expect to witness a significant relation between IPV and women’s employment in the other models as well. Another potential explanation for this result relates to the literature pointing to health as a mediating factor in the relationship between IPV and WLFP. Emotional violence may incur the least short-term health effects, thereby allowing women to take up a job or maintain employment despite experiencing emotional violence, as compared to physical or sexual violence that may cause immediate and urgent health effects. Finally, the limitations of this study, discussed in the next section, may be driving these results.

The models also present other useful insights. Women with higher education are more likely (almost 10 percentage points) to be employed in the past 12 months than those with no education. Age is also positively associated with women’s employment, with all models revealing that as women age, they are 1.8 percentage points more likely to be employed in the past 12 months. In models 1 and 2, women without any children are more likely to be employed in the past 12 months than women with children. Women with an account in a bank or other financial institution are 20 percentage points more likely to be employed in the past 12 months than those with no such account. A similar but smaller in magnitude relation is visible for women who own land. These results are consistent with the existing research on WLFP, demonstrating the important role of education, asset ownership, fertility, financial control and age on women’s employment.
Women who do not justify wife beating are less likely to be employed in the past 12 months compared to women who do justify wife beating. This result could be surprising; women’s attitudes towards wife beating is one representation of their level of empowerment, and it makes sense to expect women who do not justify wife beating to be more likely to be employed in the past 12 months. However, evidence indicates that women who do not justify wife beating are more likely to experience violence (Amir-ud-Din et al., 2018), which may in turn influence their ability to work. Another explanation for this result is that women who possess less conservative attitudes are also more cognizant of the risks of employment, which may lead them to inadvertently avoid employment, at least in the short-term.

Amongst household level controls, women whose partners have secondary education are almost 10 percentage points less likely to be employed in the past 12 months compared to women whose partner’s do not have secondary education. Although more educated partners could mean (but not necessarily) lesser experience of violence or opposition to women’s employment, it could also mean women have lesser financial need to be employed, which may explain the result observed here. Lack of financial need may also explain why, compared to women in the poorest wealth index category, being in the richer wealth index categories decreases the likelihood of being employed in the past 12 months by 25 percentage points. Finally, women in KP, Balochistan and FATA are less likely to be employed in the past 12 months than other regions, which makes intuitive sense as these are either some of the least developed parts of Pakistan and/or experienced greater effects of conflict (UNDP, 2017).
Intersectionality and Group Specific Analysis

Model 4 involves analyzing the relation of interest for specific groups using interaction terms. As the literature review demonstrated, wealth, education and attitudes towards wife beating play a significant role in incidence of both violence as well as labor force participation. Model 4 investigates if the relation between the key independent variable, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), and the dependent variable, women’s employment is moderated by women’s education level, their wealth, or their attitudes towards wife beating. The results are in comparison to the same aforementioned reference category.

I do not find any moderating effect of education levels on the relationship between IPV and women’s employment. Although unusual, there can be several reasons for this; although education improves women’s prospects of employment while reducing the likelihood of their experience of violence, other factors such as restrictive social norms, resource constraints, limited economic opportunities and intersecting oppressions could diminish the moderating effect of education, which means that the relationship between IPV and women’s employment does not vary significantly with education levels for our sample. Evidence has also been mixed in this regard; education can have no impact on experiences of IPV, or some impact for certain types of violence (John, 2020; Kundapur et al., 2017).

However, the relationship between IPV and women’s employment is moderated by wealth, with richer women less likely to be employed in the past 12 months if they experienced violence as compared to poorer women. A plausible explanation for this result is that richer women can afford to forgo (or never take up) employment in the face of violence, while women from poorer backgrounds may have no choice. However, experience of IPV makes employment in the past 12 months less likely for all wealth categories, even if richer women are much more
likely to not work when experiencing IPV. I also found that the IPV-women’s employment relationship changes with changes in women’s attitudes towards wife beating, with women that do not justify wife beating 5.3 percentage points less likely to be employed in the past 12 months. In addition to the earlier explanations for this result, it is possible that such women face greater constraints in the labor market as a result of their attitudes, which would be less acceptable to workplaces that adhere to more regressive or conservative norms.

CONCLUSION

Pakistan has one of the lowest WLFP rates in South Asia, while having one of the highest rates of IPV in the region (World Bank, 2022; National Institute of Population Studies & ICF, 2019). This paper used the nationally representative DHS 2017-18 data from Pakistan to examine the effect of IPV on women’s labor force participation, theorizing that incidence of IPV reduces the probability of participating in the workforce as women are less likely to be employed because of limited physical, emotional or mental ability to participate; voluntary withdrawal from the workforce to reduce incidence of violence (if work is seen as a cause); and forceful withdrawal from workforce as a result of pressure from partner (the perpetrator of violence). I did not find a relationship between women’s employment and overall IPV as other factors such as education, wealth and partner’s characteristics are held constant. Similarly, I do not find evidence of a relationship between women’s employment and experience of physical and sexual IPV. This means that I do not have enough evidence to claim that ever-married women’s experience of any IPV or physical and sexual IPV affects their likelihood of being employed in the past 12 months.

Aside from the aforementioned explanations, it is possible women’s experience of violence is so normalized they do not associate it with other functions of their life, including
employment. It is a routine experience and rite of passage that women go through with their partners as other aspects of life continue the same. However, I did find that women who ever experienced emotional violence were 3.7 percentage points more likely to be employed in the past 12 months as compared to women of the reference category. Recognizing that IPV may have an effect on WLFP, but perhaps not for all ever-married women in Pakistan, I conducted group-specific analyses which revealed that richer women were least likely to be employed in the past year if they ever experienced IPV, controlling for other individual, household and social factors. I also found that women who do not justify wife beating are less likely to work in the past year if they ever experienced IPV compared to those who did not justify wife beating.

These findings are limited by a number of factors. Pakistan is regarded as one of the most ethnically (Fisher, 2013) and culturally (Morin, 2013) diverse countries in the world. It is difficult to capture the circumstances, norms, practices, beliefs and ideals of the various ethnic, religious, racial and cultural groups living in Pakistan with one survey. This means that women’s experience of IPV and its extent will vary not just by region (rural/urban) and province but also by tribe, ethnicity, race, and religion, which are not accounted for in my analysis as the DHS did not collect data against these indicators. Similarly, macro-level, global and/or external shocks can impact both WLFP and women’s experience of IPV; as discussed, women experienced a sharp rise in IPV with the advent of the pandemic. I have not controlled for these shocks in my analysis due to restrictions of time. Other factors not accounted for in my analysis either due to data unavailability or limited time include differences in the occupation types, employment quality (including mode of earnings), women’s experience of violence perpetrated by other groups (such as siblings or employers), women’s disability status, partner’s preferences for
number and/or gender of children, and parent’s characteristics (such as education or income) (Biswa and Thampi, 2021). Similarly, non-heterosexual relationships and gender minorities were not accounted for in this analysis due to lack of data and safety concerns.

Another concern in my study is the potential endogeneity between women's labor force participation and intimate partner violence (IPV), which may introduce bias into my results, as noted in Lenze and Klassen’s (2017) work. This endogeneity arises from the possibility of reverse causality, wherein experiencing IPV could prompt women to seek employment as a means of financial independence or escape from abusive relationships, as well as from the presence of unobserved factors influencing both women's decision to work and their experience of IPV. In Lenze and Klassen’s (2017) study, upon addressing endogeneity, the previously significant relationship between women's work status and IPV became insignificant, indicating that women's employment might not causally impact spousal violence. The results presented in this study should be interpreted with caution given this constraint. Moreover, as the conceptual framework demonstrates, violence operates at multiple levels that interact with each other and shapes relations and behaviors in complex and multifaceted ways. Large quantitative surveys are not enough to capture the intricate and intersectional nature of the experience of violence and qualitative research must complement quantitative findings (2021). Additionally, longitudinal studies are required to explore the if impacts of economic empowerment of women are sustained and the point at which reversals in IPV theorized by bargaining models occur (John, 2020).

Finally, an intersectional feminist lens is necessary in research such as this. Feminist scholars have pointed out that development paradigms including the Women in Development narratives focus on women’s intrinsic value and the business case of gender equality, focusing on
women’s exclusion from remunerative work and opportunities for employment (John, 2020; Cornwall & Rivas, 2015). However, these paradigms do not consider gender equality and women’s empowerment from a structural and power-based perspective, whereby getting women in to “corrupt and ineffective formal political institutions, or into low-paid jobs with poor labour conditions” as well as unsafe workplaces that may perpetuate non-partner violence is not advancing their rights or status in society (2020; 2015). Similarly, an analysis rooted in gender relations will also examine how men are affected by patriarchal power and help to dismantle the victim-perpetrator binary between men and women (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015). Thus, any policy responses to issues of IPV and WLFP should go beyond routine quantitative evidence to examine the intertwined and structural causes of gendered experiences of violence and work, and thereafter develop appropriate policy responses that incorporate rights and gender relations.

Due to restrictions of time, I was unable to conduct an such an examination, but it remains an avenue for future research. However, although limited in scope, my findings reveal that IPV can impact women’s employment across wealth levels and patriarchal social norms continue to play an important role in Pakistan’s WLFP, highlighting the importance of intersectional analyses and the need for policies that not only hold perpetrators to account, but also educate all genders and attempt to shift social norms. Addressing the aforementioned limitations, a future study can combine DHS data with qualitative work, ethnographic research, and feminist analyses and also involve greater exploration of the quantitative data to answer the research question of this paper. Such a study would provide policymakers relevant insight for the development of appropriate, immediate and structural responses required to prevent and eliminate IPV, while advancing gender equality and combating structural injustice.
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pakistan#:~:text=At%2020%20percent%2C%20Pakistan's%20workforce,retained%20in
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