

ABSTRACT

Background: Studies in Zimbabwe on gender-based violence, domestic violence and intimate partner violence have advocated for female empowerment as a remedy to violence and also as a tool to equip females to be in a position to leave violent and abusive relationships. Therefore, this study examines the association between female empowerment and intimate partner violence among females in Zimbabwe.

Methods: This study used secondary data obtained from the Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS) of 2010-2011. The population of interest includes females of ages 15-49 who responded to questions on domestic violence in the ZDHS. The sample size included 6542 females who responded to questions on domestic violence. The main independent variable is female empowerment measured by participation in decision making, ownership of assets, employment status and educational level. The other independent variables used were age, place of residence, marital status, region and religion. The dependent variable is intimate partner violence and it is in two forms: physical and sexual violence. Data analysis was done in three phases the univariate included conducting the background characteristics of the respondents using a series of frequencies and percentage distributions. The bivariate analysis involved the cross tabulation of the outcome variables, physical and sexual violence with all the independent variables using the Pearson's chi-square test. The multivariate level involved the use of stepwise forward binary logistic regression to examine the association between female empowerment with physical and sexual violence.

Results: The results showed that 27.31% females experienced physical violence and 14.68% sexual violence. Female empowerment was associated with physical and sexual violence. The females who are empowered were significantly more likely to experience physical and sexual violence than not empowered females.

Conclusions: A lot needs to be done besides empowering of females to address intimate partner violence. The societal norms and values could be possible barriers affecting females in that the empowerment of females might be portrayed as going against set norms and values in some societies.

Keywords: Female Empowerment, Intimate Partner Violence, Zimbabwe