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ABSTRACT

In Zimbabwe, levels of spousal Gender-Based Violence (GBV) remain a health, human rights and development concern. The main objective of this study was to investigate the association between spousal GBV and women's empowerment among women aged 15-49 who were currently in union or living with a man. The analysis utilised the 2010-11 Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS) data. Spousal violence was measured by different forms of GBV i.e. physical, emotional, sexual violence and overall GBV. Overall, 48% of women of reproductive age who are in a union experience some type of GBV. More specifically, 27% report physical violence, 26% sexual violence and 25% emotional violence. The analysis showed that women who did not participate in decision-making at household level were more likely to experience GBV than those who do. Women who have control over their spouses' earnings were less likely to suffer from GBV. However, ownership of property (land and/or house) was not associated with spousal GBV. Women who were in polygamous unions, whose spouses drank alcohol, earned less than their spouses and had a history of non-spousal physical violence were more likely to experience GBV than all other women. Younger women (aged 15-19 years) were more likely to experience spousal emotional, physical and sexual violence than the older age groups. Recommendations are to improve women's participation in decision making, mainstreaming GBV in development, and improve the economic and social emancipation of women and girls.

INTRODUCTION

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) has been acknowledged as a serious global health, human rights and development issue (USAID 2012). The United Nations General Assembly 1993, Article 1, defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life". The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (Convention on the Elimination of Violence Against Women [CEDAW]) describes violence as "manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women", and as "one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into subordinate position compared to men" (Articles 1 and 2 of the United Nations General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) and Recommendation 19, paragraph 6 of the 11th Session 1992 of the CEDAW Committee).

Violence against women is a universal problem affecting millions of women worldwide everyday (Oyediran and Isiugo-Abanihe 2005). Several studies indicate that women and girls are at higher risk of experiencing violence compared with men and boys. According to estimates by the United Nations (United Nations 2013), one in three women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence. According to Heise et al. (1994), the most common form of violence against women is domestic violence, i.e., violence perpetrated by a current husband/partner or ex-husband/partner (Naved and Persson 2005; WHO 2005).

Several studies have reported that such spousal GBV is widespread (Abramsky et al. 2011; Jewkes2002; Koenig et al. 2003; Saffitz 2010); however, the prevalence of spousal violence is higher in African and Latin American countries (Abramsky et al. 2011). Studies conducted in sub-Saharan Africa indicate high prevalence of emotional, physical, and sexual violence against women (Jewkes et al. 2002; Koenig et al. 2003; Nyamayemombe et al. 2010; Saffitz 2010). Similarly, population-based surveys conducted in Eastern and Southern Africa also indicate high prevalence of spousal physical violence, ranging from 13% in South Africa to 49% in Ethiopia and spousal sexual violence, ranging from 7% in South Africa to 59% in Ethiopia (Keesbury and Askew 2010).

The high level of spousal GBV is a concernin Zimbabwe. According to the 2010-11 Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS), 30% of all women age 15-49 reported that they had experienced physical violence since the age of 15, while 27% of women had experienced sexual violence since the age of 15, of which nine out of ten cases were perpetrated by the woman's spouse, partner or boyfriend. Nyamayemombe et al. (2010), reporting on the results of the preceding ZDHS (2005-06), found that 47% of currently married women age 15-49 in Zimbabwe had experienced some form of spousal violence, with 28% having experienced physical violence, 29% emotional violence and 18% sexual violence.

"Violence against women (VAW) is one of the most rampant human rights violations", Oxfam (2012) has declared. Domestic violence can lead to death and disability (UN Millennium Project 2005; USAID 2009). Not only is GBV a major obstacle to women's and girls' development and to the welfare and development of their communities and societies as a whole, but is also negatively impacts the socioeconomic development of the country (Oxfam 2012; World Bank 2011). Unequal power relations between men and women contribute substantially to spousal violence (USAID 2009).

Several studies conducted on GBV have focused on physical, sexual and emotional or psychological violence. Most of these studies have looked at individual-level or family factors, side lining the community or socio-cultural factors such as gender inequality. Jewkes et al. (2002) found that domestic violence is strongly associated with the "status of women in a society and the normative use of violence as part of the exercise of power". In their analysis of data from the ZDHS 2005-06, Nyamayemombe et al. (2010) looked at the relationship between GBV and women's status according to variables such as: age gap with husband/partner, education gap with husband/partner, person who decides woman's cash earnings, and participation in household decisions. They found that these indicators were predictors of spousal violence. Their findings are discussed in the next section.

Information about the interface between spousal violence and women's empowerment in Zimbabwe remains relatively limited, especially regarding women's empowerment as measured by ownership of assets such as land or a house. The 2010-11 ZDHS does not elaborate on the linkages between spousal violence and women's empowerment, hence the need to explore this relationship in detail to inform policymakers and programmes. This study was conducted to

provide evidence of the scale of spousal GBV in Zimbabwe. It does this by exploring the association between spousal GBV and women's empowerment, incorporating other aspects of women's empowerment—i.e., women's ownership of property (land and/or house) and control over cash earnings—as well as two indicators of economic empowerment identified in the 2010-11 ZDHS. The specific objectives of this further analysis of ZDHS data were to: (a) determine the prevalence of spousal GBV, including the different forms of GBV (physical, emotional, and sexual); (b) assess the indicators of women's empowerment as determinants of GBV; and (c) assess other factors associated with GBV. The results are expected to help inform policies and programmes.

PREVIOUS STUDIES AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Research has shown that a multitude of factors ranging from individual factors to societal and structural factors are associated with spousal GBV (e.g., Abramsky et al. 2011; Nyamayemombe et al. 2010; Oyediran and Isiugo-Abanihe 2005; USAID 2012). Several studies have reported that women who experienced domestic violence in childhood are more likely to experience domestic violence from their husbands or partners (Abramsky et al. 2011; Devries et al. 2010; Jewkes et al. 2002). Tuladhar et al. (2013) found that women's empowerment is inversely associated with greater likelihood of having experienced spousal violence, but the results were not significant when age, wealth, caste/ethnicity and ecological zone were controlled. They concluded that violence is a multi-faceted problem affected by a wide variety of contextual and situational factors.

Previous studies have shown a positive association between polygamous unions and GBV (Abramsky et al. 2011; Nyamayemombe et al. 2010). For example, Nyamayemombe et al. (2010) in their analysis of the ZDHS 2005-06 reported data that women who were in polygamous unions were more likely to experience spousal violence (46%) compared with women in monogamous unions (35%). Also, domestic violence is positively associated with husband's or partner's alcohol consumption (Abramsky et al. 2011; Devries et al. 2010; Saffitz 2010).

Often, women who have daughters only are more likely to be subjected to spousal violence than women with sons. The number of male children could also be used as a proxy for having daughters only. A negative relationship was reported between the number of male children and violence (Saffitz 2010). This could be because of a "man's increased satisfaction with his wife for bearing male children, to male children having more opportunities to contribute to the family income, or to a male child's ability to protect his mother" (Saffitz 2010: 89). The opposite reasons could explain why women with daughters only are at higher odds of being abused.

Several studies have reported substantial social acceptability and tolerance for GBV among women (Abramsky et al. 2011; Devries et al. 2010; Oyediran and Isiugo-Abanihe 2005; Saffitz 2010). It has been suggested that one of the reasons some women justify wife beating is that "victims of GBV have internalised the abuses committed against them and are now part of the status quo that, perhaps unknowingly, propagates such beliefs" (Saffitz 2010: 96). However, Jewkes et al. (2002) found no association between GBV and women's attitudes towards violence.

Women whose husbands or partners were younger or were of the same age were more likely to experience spousal violence than women with older husbands/partners, especially women whose partners were 10 or more years older (Nyamayemombe et al. 2010). Women whose husbands/partners have less education than they have were more likely to experience spousal violence than women whose husbands/partners have the same or higher level of education (Nyamayemombe et al. 2010). Other researchers have shown an inverse relationship between level of education attained and experience of spousal violence among women currently in union (Abramsky et al. 2011; Devries et al. 2010; Oyediran and Isiugo-Abanihe 2005; Saffitz 2010). Wealth index has also been reported to be inversely related to GBV (Oyediran and Isiugo-Abanihe 2005); women in households in the highest (wealthiest) quintile were less likely to experience spousal violence than those in households in the lowest (poorest) wealth quintile.

Younger women are at higher risk of spousal GBV than older women (Abramsky et al. 2011). Also, several studies have shown associations between spousal violence and urban-rural residence and level of education; for example, in Zimbabwe women in rural areas and women who are less educated are more likely to have experienced spousal violence than women in urban areas and women with higher education. In contrast, studies in South Africa have reported a U-shaped relationship between intimate partner violence (IPV) and education, whereby reduced IPV is seen at both the lowest and highest educational levels (Abramsky et al. 2011).

Given the empirical context of spousal violence, there are relatively few studies that investigate the association between spousal GBV and women's ownership of property (land and/or house), which are considered important indicators of women empowerment, especially land. This study aims to build upon literature on the association between GBV and such indicators as women's ownership of property, as these have not been included in previous studies.

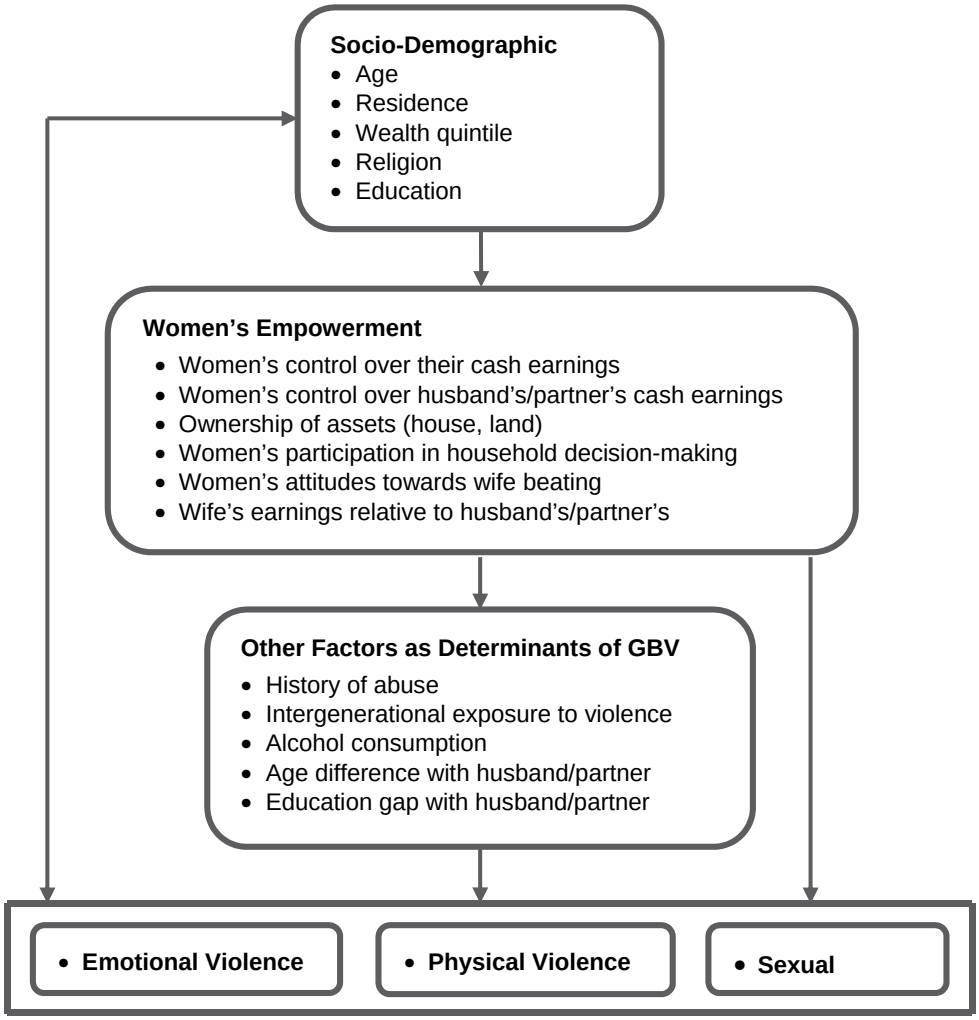
The analysis was guided by the Heise (1998) model, an ecological framework that helps to explain the complex interactions of gender and power. The model recognises the roles played by factors at four different levels of violence causality: individual, interpersonal, institutional and structural. The first level (individual) corresponds to an individual's personal and biological history, encompassing factors of an individual's development that shape responses to inter-personal and institutional stressors. The individual level includes factors such as witnessing spousal violence as a child and being abused as a child. The second level (interpersonal) represents

the person's immediate context in which violence takes place, which is the family, household, and intimate or acquaintance relationships. It covers issues such as alcohol consumption and male control of wealth. The third level, (institutional), accounts for institutions and social structures that affect the individual including socioeconomic status and isolation of women. The fourth level (structural) represents the person's economic, social and cultural environment, including factors such as acceptance of violence, men's entitlement/ownership of women and masculinity linked to aggression and dominance (Abramsky et al. 2011; Heise 1998; Saffitz 2010). The framework seeks to demonstrate that no single level or factor determines or explains violence but rather that a combination of factors yields violence (Moser and Shrader 1999).

Before moving on in our discussion of spousal violence, empowerment theory must be mentioned (Itzhaky and Porat 2005). According to Payne and Wermeling (2009), this theory asserts that "victimization is not something that happens to an individual because of personal characteristics, family or origin, but rather family violence can happen to anyone who has the misfortune of becoming involved with someone who seeks to maintain power and control over intimate partners or family members". The feminist approach to domestic violence "holds that almost all male-on-female abuse is based on the patriarchal values of our society and that these values are sanctioned by a culture in which male domination of women is both covertly and overtly reinforced" (Lawson 2003; Payne and Wermeling 2009). Within the patriarchal system, many men still hold traditional beliefs that they control their wives, which justifies spousal violence.

This paper therefore seeks to account for variables that are crucial in all the levels of a person's social environment, by assessing factors that put women at risk of spousal GBV, taking into consideration issues of women's empowerment. The Heise (1998) model was adopted and modified to fit the local context, incorporating some aspects of women's empowerment (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Conceptual framework for the analysis



Source: Adapted from Heise (1998)

DATA AND METHODS

Study Design

Our analysis uses data from the 2010-11 ZDHS, which collected data on a nationally representative sample of women age 15-49 and men age 15-54. This paper uses only data from the Woman's Questionnaire. The sample consists of 4,094 women age 15-49 currently in union or living with a man, who participated in the Household Relations Module (in the Woman's Questionnaire). Women currently in union or living with a partner were used for the analysis because of the study's focus on spousal violence. The 2010-11 ZDHS is the second DHS survey to collect data on gender-based violence in Zimbabwe; the first was the 2005-06 ZDHS (CSO and Macro International 2007). The 2010-11 ZDHS included for the first time a module on women's empowerment, which covers women's control over earnings, women's participation in decision-making, and women's access to property (land and/or house).

Variables

Our outcome or dependent variables include the different forms of GBV, i.e., spousal emotional violence, sexual violence, physical violence, and any GBV. Independent variables include women's empowerment (our key variable), which is measured by: 1) women's control over their cash earning, 2) women's control over their husband/partner's cash earnings, 3) women's ownership of assets (house, land), 4) women's participation in making household decisions, 5) women's attitudes towards wife beating, and 6) women's earnings relative to their husband/partner's earnings. Other factors associated with GBV include: history of abuse, intergenerational exposure to violence, consumption, age difference with husband/partner, education gap with husband/partner, whether husband/partner drinks alcohol, and having daughters only. Socio-demographic factors include: residence (urban, rural), wealth quintile, religion, education, and having daughters only.

Measures

The definition of *domestic violence* (a form of gender-based violence) used in this analysis is the one defined in the 2010-11 ZDHS as "any act of violence resulting in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, girls, and also men, including threats of such acts,

coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty" (ZIMSTAT and ICFI 2012). Domestic violence is also known as *spousal violence*—our preferred terminology—or *intimate partner violence*. This analysis measures spousal violence by three different forms of GBV—physical, emotional and sexual violence—as well as any spousal GBV. To determine the type of spousal violence, the ZDHS asked the following questions of respondents:

Spousal emotional violence: Ever been humiliated or threatened with harm or insulted or made to feel bad by husband/partner.

Spousal sexual violence: Ever been physically forced into unwanted sex or forced into other unwanted sexual act or physically forced to perform sexual acts by husband/partner.

Spousal physical violence: Ever been pushed, shaken or had something thrown at you, or been slapped or punched with fist, or hit by something or kicked or dragged or strangled or burnt or threatened with knife/gun or other weapon or arm twisted or hair pulled by husband/partner.

Any spousal GBV: Ever experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence from a husband or partner.

Data Analysis

The analysis was done using STATA SE Version 12 and used univariate, bivariate and multivariate methods. The univariate analysis was carried out to determine the prevalence of spousal physical, emotional and sexual violence and any GBV. In the bivariate analysis, we used Pearson's chi-square to determine whether spousal physical, emotional and sexual violence and any GBV are associated with women's empowerment indicators. Lastly, we used multivariate logistic regression to examine the association between the outcome variables and women's empowerment variables plus other compounding variables, controlling for socio-demographic factors (age group, residence, religion, and wealth quintile). Our conceptual framework, shown in Figure 1, guided the variables put in the model. The domestic violence weight (d005) was used to restore the representativeness of our sample.

In reporting the results, we considered odds ratios (ORs): OR<1 indicating a negative relationship, OR>1 indicating a positive relationship, and OR=1 indicating no association. Statistical significance was considered at the 5% level.

RESULTS

Sample Description

The sample used in this analysis consists of 4,094 currently married women age 15-49 who consented to be interviewed with the Household Relations Module in the ZDHS 2010-11. Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Almost a quarter of the women (24%) were age 25-29. Women age 20-24, 30-34 and 35-39 constituted 21%, 18% and 14% of the sample, respectively. Women age 15-19, 40-44 and 45-49 constituted 8%, 8.5% and 6.2% of the sample, respectively. The median age was 27 years (IQR=15) and the mean age was 28.1 years (SD=9.3). A third of the women (33%) resided in urban areas; 61% had attained secondary education; 43% reported their religion as Apostolic sect; and 12% were in polygamous unions. Almost half of the women (45%) were married to a man who drank alcoholic beverages. Less than a quarter (22%) of the women had daughters only. Very few women, approximately 3%, were older than their current husband/partner, and less than 1% were not sure of their husband's/partner's age.

Respondents were asked questions to determine their empowerment status. About half (49%) of women did not own any land, and 48% did not own a house. The majority of the women (62%) did not have any cash earnings, while 25% earned less than their husbands/partners, 7% earned about the same, and 6% earned more than their husbands/partners. Most women (69%) reported that control of their husband's/partner's earnings was done jointly, while 13% reported that these earnings were solely controlled by their husbands/partners. Three-quarters of the women (75%) reported that they participated in all household decisions, while 5% did not participate in any decisions. Two in five women (41%) said they believed that a man is justified in beating his wife.

Table1. Percent distribution of currently married women age 15-49 who participated in the Household Relations Module, according to background characteristics, ZDHS 2010-11

	Percent	Number
Residence		
Urban	33.0	1,352
Rural	67.0	2,742
Age		
15-19	8.0	328
20-24	21.0	861
25-29	24.2	991
30-34	17.6	721
35-39	14.4	589
40-44	8.5	349
45-49	6.2	254
Education		
No education	2.8	116
Primary	31.9	1,306
Secondary	61.4	2,513
More than secondary	3.9	159
Religion		
Traditional	0.9	36
Roman Catholic	7.3	298
Protestant	14.5	592
Pentecostal	19.2	787
Apostolic sect	43.1	1,764
Other Christian	7.3	297
Muslim	0.5	19
None	7.3	299
Other	0.1	4
Husband/Partner drinks alcohol		
No	54.6	2,235
Yes	45.4	1,859
History of physical violence (non-spousal)		
No	93.3	3,819
Yes	6.7	275
Difference in earnings		
More than spouse	5.9	241
Less than spouse	24.5	1,005
About the same	7.2	293
Woman or spouse does not have earnings	62.4	2,555
Respondent's father ever beat up her mother		
No	62.7	2,566
Yes	37.3	1,528

(Continued...)

Table 1. – *Continued*

	Percent	Number
Type of union		
Polygamy	11.5	469
Monogamy	84.1	3,444
Don't know if husband/partner has other	4.4	182
Daughters only		
No children	8.0	328
Daughters only	22.3	911
At least one son	69.7	2,855
Spousal age difference		
Wife older	3.3	136
Wife same age	3.9	161
Wife 1-5 years younger	35.4	1,450
Wife 6-10 years younger	35.7	1,461
Wife is 10+ younger	21.0	860
Don’t know husband’s age	0.6	25
Woman’s control over her cash earnings		
Woman alone	12.6	514
Woman and spouse/partner	25.0	1,024
Spouse/partner only	2.9	119
Others	59.5	2,437
Woman’s control over husband’s cash earnings		
Woman alone	12.5	510
Woman and spouse/partner	68.8	2,816
Spouse/partner only	12.9	526
Others	5.9	242
Ownership of assets (land)		
Do not own	48.7	1,993
Alone	9.5	391
Jointly	39.8	1,628
Alone and jointly	2.0	83
Ownership of assets (house)		
Do not own	48.4	1,982
Alone	9.4	386
Jointly	40.1	1,641
Alone and jointly	2.1	84
Wife beating justified (number)		
Wife should not be beaten	59.3	2,428
Believes man is justified in beating wife	40.7	1,666

(Continued...)

Table 1. – *Continued*

	Percent	Number
Decisions in which woman participates (number)		
None	4.6	189
Some decisions	20.4	835
All decisions	75.0	3,070
Total	100.0	4,094

Table 2 shows the results of bivariate analysis performed to examine the association between each form of spousal violence and women's empowerment. Overall, 48% of women studied had experienced some type of GBV—specifically, 25% reported emotional violence, 27% reported physical violence, and 26% reported sexual violence.

As Table 2 shows, women whose husband or partner solely controlled his cash earnings were more likely to suffer from spousal emotional violence (33%) compared with women who jointly controlled their husband's/partner's earnings, or women who alone decided how the man's earnings were used, 24% and 23%, respectively ($p<0.001$). Women who said that a man is justified in beating his wife were more likely to suffer from spousal emotional violence (30%) than women who said that a wife should not be beaten (21%) ($p<0.001$). Women's participation in household decision-making was also associated with spousal emotional violence. Women who did not participate in household decision-making were more likely to experience spousal emotional violence (33%) compared with women who participated in some or all decisions, 31% and 23%, respectively ($p<0.001$). No significant associations were found between spousal emotional violence and the other measures of women's empowerment, i.e., women's control over their own cash earnings, and ownership of land or a house.

Physical violence was associated with almost all the measures of women's empowerment, with the exception of women's control over their own cash earnings and ownership of a house. As with emotional violence, women who responded that a man is justified in beating his wife were more likely to experience physical violence (34%) compared with women who did not believe in wife beating (22%) ($p<0.001$). Unlike emotional violence, where women who did not participate in household decisions were more likely to suffer from emotional violence, women who participated in some household decisions were more likely to have experienced physical violence

(34%) compared with women who did not participate in any decisions (28%), or women who participated in all decisions (25%) ($p<0.05$).

Women whose husband/partner solely controlled his earnings were more likely to experience sexual violence (30%) compared with women who made decisions jointly with their husbands/partners (27%), or women who solely controlled the earnings of their husbands/partners (25%) ($p<0.05$). Again, women who said that men were justified in beating their wives were more likely to experience sexual violence (30%) compared with women who did not believe in wife beating, (23%) ($p<0.001$). Women who participated in some household decisions were more likely to experience sexual violence (33%) than women who participated in all household decisions (24%), or women who did not take part in any household decisions (25%) ($p<0.001$). No significant associations were found between sexual violence and the other measures of women's empowerment, i.e., women's control over their own cash earnings, and ownership of land and/or a house.

Regarding any type of GBV, bivariate associations were observed for only two measures of women's empowerment. First, women whose husband/partner solely controlled his cash earnings (52%) or had shared control jointly (53%) were more likely to experience some type of GBV compared with women who solely controlled their husband's/partner's earnings (47%) ($p<0.001$). Second, women were more likely to experience some type of GBV when they believed a man is justified in beating his wife (57%) compared with women who did not believe in wife beating (42%) ($p<0.001$). No significant associations were found between any GBV and women's control of their own cash earnings, ownership of land or a house and women's participation in household decisions.

Table 2. Bivariate analysis of spousal GBV according to independent variables of women's empowerment, currently married women age 15-49 who participated in the Household Relations Module, ZDHS 2010-11

	Emotional violence			Physical violence			Sexual violence			Any gender-based violence		
Independent variables	**Number**	**%**	***p*-value**	**Number**	**%**	***p*-value**	**Number**	**%**	***p*-value**	**Number**	**%**	***p*-value**
Women's control over their cash earnings												
Woman alone	145	28.2		167	32.5		146	28.3		279	54.2	
Woman and spouse/partner	260	25.4		280	27.4		277	27.1		506	49.4	
Woman has no control	616	24.1	0.211	655	25.6	**0.013**	631	24.7	0.200	1,187	46.4	**0.013**
Women's control over husbands' cash earnings												
Woman alone	122	23.0		152	25.7		140	24.5		267	46.5	
Woman and spouse/partner	646	24.0		722	29.9		690	27.4		1,310	52.5	
Woman has no control	251	32.7	**0.000**	227	29.6	**0.047**	225	29.2	0.064	394	51.4	**0.024**
Ownership of house												
Does not own	482	24.3		508	25.6		523	26.4		944	47.7	
Alone	109	28.3		108	28.0		101	26.1		187	48.4	
Jointly	412	25.1		472	28.8		412	25.1		806	49.1	
Alone and jointly	17	20.3	0.450	14	16.4	0.062	18	21.1	0.732	34	40.3	0.571
Ownership of land												
Does not own	476	23.9		501	25.2		494	24.8		931	46.8	
Alone	104	26.5		103	26.3		102	26.1		185	47.3	
Jointly	422	25.9		483	29.7		441	27.1		823	50.6	
Alone and Jointly	18	21.9	0.500	15	18.4	**0.023**	17	20.1	0.403	33	39.8	0.129
Wife beating justified												
Wife should not be beaten	519	21.4		544	22.4		555	22.9		1,027	42.4	
Believes man is justified in beating wife	502	30.1	**0.000**	559	33.5	**0.000**	499	29.9	**0.000**	944	56.6	**0.000**

(Continued...)

Table 2. – *Continued*

	Emotional violence			Physical violence			Sexual violence			Any gender-based violence		
Independent variables	**Number**	**%**	***p*-value**	**Number**	**%**	***p*-value**	**Number**	**%**	***p*-value**	**Number**	**%**	***p*-value**
Decisions in which women participate												
None	63	33.2		53	28.0		47	25.0		100	53.1	
Some decisions	257	30.9		284	34.0		273	32.7		466	55.8	
All decisions	700	22.8	**0.000**	766	24.9	**0.000**	734	23.9	**0.000**	1,406	45.8	0.279
Total	1,020	24.9		1,102	26.9		1,054	25.7		1,971	48.2	

Factors Associated with Spousal GBV: Emotional, Physical and Sexual Violence, and Any GBV

Multivariate logistic regression was employed to examine the association between spousal violence and socio-demographic variables, as well as women's empowerment indicators. All predictors were entered in the model simultaneously. Tables 3 and 4 present the results.

Emotional Violence

The results in Table 3 show that older women are less likely to suffer from spousal emotional violence compared with younger women age 15-19. For example, women age 30-34 were 44% less likely to suffer from spousal emotional violence than women age 15-19 (AOR=0.56; 95% CI=(.37, .85)). The odds of spousal emotional violence among women in polygamous marriages were 73% higher than among women in monogamous marriages (AOR=1.73; 95% CI=(1.33, 2.25)). Women who had at least one son were 1.48 times more likely to suffer from spousal emotional violence compared with women with no children (AOR=1.48; 95% CI=(1.07, 2.16)). However, the association between emotional violence and women with daughters only was not statistically significant. Education, wealth status, religion and spousal age difference were not predictors of emotional violence.

The results in Table 4 show that women who reported that their husband/partner only has control of his cash earning were about twice as likely to suffer from emotional violence compared with women who reported that they control their husband's/partner's earnings (AOR=1.78; 95%CI=(1.27, 2.47)). Women exposed to non-spousal violence since age 15 were 1.70 times more likely to suffer from spousal emotional violence than those who were not exposed (AOR=1.70; 95% CI=(1.43, 2.03)). Spousal emotional violence was significantly higheramong women whose husbands/partners drank alcohol than among those whose husbands/partners did not (AOR=1.43; 95% CI=(1.11, 1.62)). Women who believed men were justified in beating their wives were 0.35 times more likely to suffer from spousal emotional violence than those who did not believe wife beating was justified (AOR=1.35; 95% CI=(1.14,1.60)).

Physical Violence

As with spousal emotional violence, age is significantly associated with spousal physical violence. Women age 35 and older were less likely to suffer spousal physical violence compared with women age 15-19 after controlling for all other variables (Table 3). Women who were in polygamous marriages were 1.77 times more likely to suffer spousal physical violence than those in monogamous marriages (AOR=1.77; 95% CI=(1.35, 2.31)). Table 4 shows that women with husbands/partners who drank alcohol were 1.60 times more likely to suffer spousal physical violence than women with husbands/partners who did not drink alcohol (AOR=1.60; 95% CI=(1.33, 1.92)). Women whose father ever beat up their mother were more likely to experience physical violence than women who were not exposed to such violence (AOR=1.65; 95% CI=(1.18,2.30)). Women with history of non-spousal violence were about twice as likely to experience physical violence compared with women who had not been exposed to such violence (AOR=2.11; 95% CI=(1.78, 2.50)). Among the women's empowerment indicators, women whose cash earning were controlled by others were significantly less likely to experience physical violence compared with women who controlled their own cash earnings. Table 4 also shows that joint ownership of land is an indicator associated with increased physical violence against women (AOR=1.36; 95% CI=(1.07, 1.73)).

Sexual Violence

The results in Table 3 show that, as with spousal emotional violence and spousal physical violence, age is significantly associated with spousal sexual violence. As women's age increases, the odds of experiencing spousal sexual violence decrease. Women in a polygamous union were more likely to experience sexual violence compared with women in a monogamous union (AOR=1.45; 95% CI=(1.12, 1.88)). The odds of experiencing spousal sexual violence among women who had a history of non-spousal physical violence (i.e., physical violence from people other than their husband/partner) were 1.5 times higher than among women without a history of non-spousal physical violence (AOR=1.46; 95% CI=(1.24, 1.73)). Women whose husbands/partners drank alcohol were 1.41 times more likely to suffer spousal sexual violence than those whose husbands/partners did not drink (AOR=1.41; 95% CI=(1.19, 1.67)). Additionally, women who reported that their father beat up their mother were twice as likely to experience sexual

violence compared with those who were not exposed to such violence. The women's empowerment measures were not significantly associated with spousal sexual violence.

Any Gender-Based Violence (Emotional, Physical, or Sexual)

General trends in the odds of women being abused by their husbands/partners show that the older the woman, the less likely she is to have experienced gender-based violence, compared with women age 15-19. Women who were in polygamous marriages (AOR=1.45; 95% CI=(1.12, 1.88)), women who were married to men who drank alcohol (AOR=1.47; 95% CI=(1.26, 1.71)), women who had a history of non-spousal physical violence (AOR=1.96; 95% CI=(1.72, 2.24)), and women who reported that their father beat up their mother (AOR=2.42; 95% CI=(1.84, 3.17)) were more likely to experience gender-based violence than other women in the analysis. The rest of the indicators of women's empowerment were not statistically significant in their association with GBV, except for 1) women who believed that men were justified in beating their wives compared with women who did not believe in wife beating (AOR=1.48; 95% CI=(1.26, 1.73)), and 2) women who owned land jointly with their husbands/partners compared with women who did not own land (AOR=1.32, 95% CI=(1.07, 1.63)).

Table 3. Multivariate analysis of socio-demographic and other factors associated with spousal physical, emotional and sexual violence, and any GBV, currently married women age 15-49 who participated in the Household Relations Module, ZDHS 2010-11

	Emotional violence			Physical violence			Sexual violence			Any GBV		
Independent variables	**AOR**	**95% CI**		**AOR**	**95% CI**		**AOR**	**95% CI**		**AOR**	**95% CI**	
Residence (Ref. = Urban)												
Rural	0.90	0.69	1.18	1.01	0.76	1.35	1.04	0.81	1.34	1.02	0.82	1.28
Age in years (Ref. = 15-19)												
20-24	0.82	0.55	1.22	1.14	0.76	1.70	0.58**	0.42	0.81	0.71*	0.50	1.00
25-29	0.71	0.47	1.07	0.97	0.62	1.52	0.58**	0.41	0.82	0.69*	0.48	0.98
30-34	0.56**	0.37	0.85	0.63	0.40	1.00	0.47**	0.32	0.68	0.49**	0.34	0.72
35-39	0.56**	0.36	0.85	0.55*	0.34	0.88	0.33**	0.22	0.49	0.44**	0.29	0.66
40-44	0.53*	0.32	0.89	0.51*	0.29	0.89	0.38**	0.24	0.60	0.46**	0.30	0.71
45-49	0.54*	0.32	0.90	0.47*	0.26	0.85	0.28**	0.17	0.49	0.38**	0.24	0.59
Education (Ref. = No education)												
Primary	1.04	0.57	1.89	1.17	0.60	2.27	1.47	0.78	2.78	1.24	0.69	2.24
Secondary	1.05	0.56	2.00	0.86	0.42	1.77	1.95*	1.02	3.73	1.25	0.66	2.34
More than secondary	0.84	0.37	1.89	0.34*	0.13	0.88	1.48	0.67	3.27	0.81	0.39	1.71
Wealth quintile (Ref. = Lowest 20%)												
Second	0.99	0.74	1.31	0.95	0.74	1.23	0.82	0.61	1.11	0.91	0.70	1.18
Middle	1.13	0.87	1.48	1.21	0.93	1.57	0.99	0.76	1.29	1.04	0.80	1.36
Fourth	0.98	0.74	1.30	1.06	0.79	1.42	1.36*	1.03	1.78	1.09	0.83	1.44
Highest	0.92	0.63	1.35	1.00	0.69	1.45	1.22	0.88	1.67	0.84	0.61	1.15

(Continued...)

Table 3. – *Continued*

	Emotional violence			Physical violence			Sexual violence			Any GBV		
Independent variables	**AOR**	**95% CI**		**AOR**	**95% CI**		**AOR**	**95% CI**		**AOR**	**95% CI**	
Religion (Ref. = Roman Catholic)												
Protestant	0.90	0.62	1.31	1.05	0.71	1.56	1.01	0.69	1.48	1.07	0.76	1.50
Pentecostal	1.05	0.72	1.54	1.05	0.72	1.53	0.96	0.67	1.38	1.21	0.88	1.67
Apostolic sect	1.24	0.87	1.75	1.28	0.91	1.82	1.17	0.83	1.65	1.37	1.00	1.88
Other Christian	1.20	0.76	1.91	1.03	0.65	1.63	0.63*	0.40	0.98	0.94	0.62	1.42
None	1.42	0.93	2.16	1.17	0.76	1.78	0.78	0.49	1.26	1.14	0.77	1.70
Other religion	1.64	0.78	3.46	1.65	0.78	3.51	0.86	0.36	2.04	1.53	0.73	3.22
Type of union (Ref. = Monogamy)												
Polygamy	1.73**	1.33	2.25	1.77**	1.35	2.31	1.01	0.75	1.36	1.45**	1.12	1.88
Don't know if husband/partner has other	1.11	0.74	1.67	1.21	0.82	1.80	1.05	0.73	1.52	1.02	0.72	1.45
Daughters only (Ref. = No children)												
Daughters only	1.43	0.96	2.12	1.48	0.99	2.21	1.07	0.77	1.49	1.26	0.90	1.77
At least one son	1.48*	1.01	2.16	1.47	1.00	2.18	1.16	0.83	1.63	1.43*	1.02	2.01
Spousal age difference (Ref. = Wife older)												
Wife same age	0.77	0.44	1.37	1.11	0.65	1.92	1.26	0.72	2.20	1.34	0.81	2.20
Wife 1-5 years younger	0.99	0.66	1.49	0.84	0.58	1.24	1.25	0.80	1.96	1.27	0.88	1.81
Wife 6-10 years younger	0.92	0.61	1.37	0.75	0.51	1.11	1.32	0.85	2.05	1.26	0.90	1.77
Wife is 10+ younger	0.76	0.50	1.16	0.67	0.45	1.01	1.13	0.71	1.79	1.04	0.73	1.50

Significance level: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 4. Multivariate analysis of women's empowerment and other factors associated with spousal physical, emotional and sexual violence, and any GBV, currently married women age 15-49, ZDHS 2010-11

	Emotional violence			Physical violence			Sexual violence			Any GBV		
Independent variables	**OR**	**95% CI**		**OR**	**95% CI**		**OR**	**95% CI**		**OR**	**95% CI**	
Women's control over own cash earnings (Ref. = Woman alone)												
Woman and spouse/partner	1.01	0.78	1.32	0.89	0.69	1.15	1.06	0.78	1.43	0.97	0.76	1.25
Spouse/partner only	1.05	0.63	1.74	0.92	0.54	1.56	1.06	0.57	1.98	1.24	0.72	2.13
Others	0.85	0.66	1.10	0.74*	0.57	0.95	0.89	0.68	1.16	0.76	0.61	0.95
Women's control over husband's cash earnings (Ref. = Woman alone)												
Woman and spouse/partner	1.08	0.80	1.44	0.94	0.73	1.21	0.84	0.65	1.09	0.86	0.69	1.09
Spouse/partner only	1.78**	1.27	2.47	1.09	0.78	1.51	1.30	0.94	1.81	1.13	0.85	1.50
Others	1.05	0.66	1.65	0.85	0.55	1.31	0.92	0.59	1.43	0.68	0.46	1.00
Ownership of house (Ref. = Don't own)												
Alone	1.21	0.77	1.90	1.14	0.75	1.72	1.09	0.70	1.69	1.03	0.68	1.55
Jointly	0.94	0.71	1.24	0.92	0.72	1.18	0.94	0.73	1.21	0.90	0.71	1.14
Alone and jointly	0.97	0.49	1.91	0.79	0.40	1.54	1.09	0.52	2.28	1.03	0.53	2.01
Ownership of land (Ref. = Don't own)												
Alone	0.98	0.61	1.59	0.89	0.55	1.46	1.30	0.84	2.01	0.96	0.64	1.45
Jointly	1.22	0.94	1.57	1.36*	1.07	1.73	1.56**	1.24	1.97	1.32**	1.07	1.63
Alone and jointly	0.99	0.52	1.89	0.81	0.43	1.53	0.99	0.43	2.30	0.85	0.41	1.74
Number of decisions which women participate (Ref. None)												
Some decisions	1.01	0.68	1.49	1.23	0.75	2.04	1.52	1.00	2.30	1.10	0.75	1.62
All decisions	0.85	0.58	1.27	1.00	0.62	1.61	1.23	0.82	1.86	0.97	0.66	1.42

(Continued...)

Table 4. – *Continued*

	Emotional violence			Physical violence			Sexual violence			Any GBV		
Independent variables	**OR**	**95% CI**		**OR**	**95% CI**		**OR**	**95% CI**		**OR**	**95% CI**	
Wife beating justified (Ref. = Wife should not be beaten)												
Believes man is justified in beating wife	1.35**	1.14	1.60	1.36**	1.15	1.61	1.26**	1.07	1.49	1.48**	1.26	1.73
History of non-spousal physical violence (Ref. = No)												
Yes	1.70**	1.43	2.03	2.11**	1.78	2.50	1.46**	1.24	1.73	1.96**	1.72	2.24
Husband/partner drinks alcohol (Ref. = No)												
Yes	1.34**	1.11	1.62	1.60**	1.33	1.92	1.41**	1.19	1.67	1.47**	1.26	1.71
Respondent's father ever beat up her mother (Ref. = No)												
Yes	2.32**	1.75	3.08	1.65**	1.18	2.30	1.97**	1.45	2.67	2.42**	1.84	3.17
Spousal education difference (Ref. = Neither educated)												
Both have equal education	0.64	0.20	2.05	0.95	0.25	3.65	0.51	0.16	1.59	0.82	0.28	2.41
Husband has more education	0.70	0.23	2.15	0.99	0.27	3.65	0.65	0.21	2.02	0.92	0.32	2.63
Wife has more education	0.85	0.26	2.78	1.02	0.26	4.00	0.53	0.17	1.68	0.98	0.33	2.90
Don't know/Missing	0.54	0.15	1.96	0.78	0.18	3.34	0.33	0.09	1.23	0.52	0.15	1.80

Significance level: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

DISCUSSION

Gender-based violence (GBV) has become a major development challenge across the world in general, and in Zimbabwe in particular. The extent of GBV among currently married women (spousal GBV) in Zimbabwe is very high. The overall prevalence of (any) spousal GBV in Zimbabwe is 48%. By type of violence, 26% of women included in the analysis had experienced spousal sexual violence, 27% had experienced spousal physical violence, and 25% had experienced spousal emotional violence.

The main objective of this analysis of the 2010-11 ZDHS was to investigate the association between women's empowerment and spousal GBV. The analysis showed that most of the indicators of women's empowerment were not associated with spousal GBV, except for women's control over their husband's cash earnings and women's ownership of land. Women who have no control over their husband's cash earnings are more likely to experience spousal GBV. Given that the majority of women do not have cash earnings, while they are the custodians of children and must ensure that children have access to food, health care and education among other essentials, their inability to control earnings exposes them to the risk of spousal violence.

Women activists have long advocated for ownership of land by women as a form of empowerment. However, no significant relationship was found between ownership of land by the woman alone and GBV. This could be because few women in the study owned land of their own (9%). Women who owned land jointly with their spouse were more likely to suffer from sexual violence than women who did not own land. The analysis also showed that ownership of a house was not associated with spousal GBV. This finding contributes to the worldwide body of information on women's empowerment and GBV. Women's ownership of land was associated with spousal sexual violence, but only in the case of joint ownership with their husbands/partners. This last finding suggests a need to promote increased single-ownership of land by women.

The findings in this study show that women age 15-19 are more likely to experience spousal emotional, physical and sexual violence than older women. This could be explained by such factors as: 1) intergenerational sexual and marital relationships, 2) marital communication and formation challenges because of the age gap, and 3) mismatch in marital expectations. With age, most relationships stabilize and communication improves. Hence, there is a need for GBV behaviour change communication to be targeted at adolescents. Given the documented link between GBV

and HIV (Nyamayemombe et al. 2010), addressing this problem among youth becomes critical. Targeted interventions should address male norms and behaviours; at the same time, the freedom and self-determination of unmarried young women and adolescent girls must be considered. It is equally important to create GBV services and facilities that are “young-women-friendly”.

Currently married women in polygamous relationships were more likely to experience GBV than women in monogamous relationships. The results in this study, like preceding studies (CSO and Macro International 2007), point to the effects of alcohol consumption on GBV. Alcohol consumption was significantly associated with GBV in all its forms. Currently married women whose husbands/partners consume alcohol were more likely to experience spousal GBV than women whose husbands/partners do not. Abuse of alcohol has been cited as a major problem across the world. Other studies, such as Abramsky et al. (2011), Devries et al. (2010), and Saffitz (2010), have found that alcohol consumption, coupled with income challenges at the household level, is among the causes of spousal emotional, physical and sexual violence.

Exposure to violence is also critical in understanding GBV. The analysis shows that currently married women who witnessed or experienced GBV prior to marriage were more likely to experience spousal emotional or physical violence. Having a history of violence puts women at higher odds of being sexually abused, according to Jewkes et al. (2002). In the same realm, many of the women in the analysis reported that wife beating may be justified. This shows the extent to which exposure to a certain negative behaviours can be perpetuated and become detrimental to society in general and to women in particular.

The analysis also shows that women with at least one son were more likely to experience emotional violence than women with no children. There was no significant association between women with daughters only and GBV. This is contrary to the findings from other studies on spousal violence; Saffitz (2010) reported a negative relationship between number of sons and spousal violence.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The analysis is based on data from the 2010-11 ZDHS. The results cannot be generalised to ever-married or never-married women because the study is based solely on women currently in union. The sample excludes women who were previously in union—widows, divorcees and women who were separated from husbands/partners—who may have experienced spousal violence.

CONCLUSION

Spousal GBV is a major problem in Zimbabwe and a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach is needed to address this impediment to development. Young married women are particularly at the risk of spousal GBV, so there is a need to empower young women and adolescent girls. At the same time, age-sensitive development interventions need to be designed. It is also important that GBV-awareness messages are incorporated into the curriculum of secondary and tertiary schools.

The link between polygamy and GBV is strong. Compounded by the risks of HIV and AIDS, the culture of polygamy needs to be addressed. Behaviour communication has failed in areas where polygamy is an accepted practice. There is a need to look for alternative strategies that can be used to target both men and young women in such unions, while the efforts to address intergenerational sexual relationships should be strengthened. The promotion of self-determination and women's empowerment remains critical and should be targeted to include religious sects.

Alcohol abuse is a major factor in GBV. Given the documented link between alcohol abuse and HIV, it is critical that the country adopts an alcohol policy that protects both consumers and families.

As part of promoting women's empowerment, there is a need to engage men, women, youth and girls in processes that ensure access to income-earning opportunities for women and girls. In the same vein, there is need for targeted, gender-sensitive interventions that de-stigmatize the participation of women and girls in the mainstream economy. The same interventions should also ensure that women are taught to appreciate that they can make a difference in their own lives and are not to be viewed as objects or mere recipients in the economic sphere. This should start at the primary school level. Institutions of higher learning, including colleges and vocational training centres, should continue to create platforms for women to have greater participation.

Given that the decision-making process at the household level remains skewed towards men, there is a need for the engagement of men, community leaders and women in an intensive and broad-based process that identifies challenges and constraints to women's participation in decision-making. Thereafter, there is need for a comprehensive and focused behaviour change communication package that addresses the challenges and constraints. It is likely that the outcome

of this process will point to the need for economic empowerment of women, along with advancements in education.

Overall, GBV remains a major challenge in Zimbabwe, amid calls to mainstream GBV awareness in all development work, create youth-friendly GBV services (including screening), promote economic and social freedom of women and girls, offer opportunities for rehabilitation of GBV survivors (including youth), and address two major social issues that negatively impact the lives of young women and girls—polygamy and alcohol abuse—through targeted behaviour change communication. While the Domestic Violence Act (Chapter 5.16: 2007) makes it criminal to perpetrate acts of GBV, there is a need to do more, by creating an environment of non-tolerance while addressing the socio-cultural barriers which stigmatize victims and keep them from reporting GBV. Engaging the community becomes critical, especially community leaders, men, and youth.

To conclude, this study contributes to the body of literature on GBV by analysing the association between women's ownership of property, as an indicator of women's empowerment, and GBV. Joint ownership was found to be associated with spousal GBV. The rest of the findings on the association between GBV and other factors including partner's alcohol consumption, age and polygamy confirm the findings from previous studies conducted in Zimbabwe and other African countries, and thus can be used for programme development.

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