



## **Empowered but violated: Study of Intimate Partner violence and Women Labour Force Participation in Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

Studies have been carried out to examine intimate partner violence against women. However, study in Nigeria have scantily examines whether variables that measure maternal labour force participation had influence on the likelihood of experiencing intimate partner violence among married women in Nigeria. The variables that measure maternal labour force participation used in this study was in four dimensions namely; employment status, types of occupation, types of employer and employment earning as its had influence on likelihood of experiencing intimate partner violence among married women in Nigeria. The study used data from 2018 Demographic and Health Survey on 19,732 women who participate in labour force and experienced one form of intimate partner violence five years preceding the survey. Chi-square tests were used to explore the association between variables and logistic regression was used in the multivariate analysis.

The results showed that about 70% of the respondents participate in labour force, 57% were into trade occupation, 78% were self-employed and 74% were paid in cash only. Also, about 32% of the respondents in the labour force experience emotional violence, 32% experienced sexual and 10% experienced physical violence. Experiencing emotional violence was significantly associated with employment status, types of occupation, and employment earning. Likewise, experiencing sexual violence was significantly associated with types of occupation and

employment earning. More so, experiencing physical violence was significantly associated with employment status, types of occupation and employment earning. Based on these findings, the study concludes that respondents who participate in labour force in Nigeria still experienced one form of intimate partner violence or the other. It is important to design interventions to deconstruct gender bias which still subject women to abuse in order to get the desired result.

Keywords: IPV, labour force participation, sexual violence, emotional violence, physical violence

## Introduction

Reducing poverty and achieving gender equality are essential components of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1 and 5, respectively, and are fundamental for the development of communities and countries (Nationen, 2016). Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a clear indicator of gender inequality, where globally one in three women have reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime (Devries et al., 2013). In addition to causing injury or loss of life, IPV is linked with a variety of adverse health outcomes, including depressive symptoms, suicide and increased risk of HIV/AIDS (Ranganathan et al., 2019; Devries et al., 2013; Jewkes, 2002). A common approach to tackling IPV has been through poverty alleviation, as donors and governments target poor women in low-income countries with microfinance, savings groups or cash transfers (Hidrobo et al., 2016). These interventions are based on the notion that women's earnings and enterprise will reduce poverty, while advancing "empowerment," defined broadly as enhancing the ability of women to access health, education, earning opportunities, rights, and political participation (Hidrobo et al., 2016). Interventions that seek to economically 'empower' women have been touted in some studies as a potential means through which to reduce women's risk of IPV (Tandrayen-Ragoobur, 2020; Sanawar et al., 2019).

Numerous cross-sectional studies using data from multiple countries have found that,

while economic development in general seems to be protective against IPV, associations between women's economic empowerment indicators, such as income generation, control over income, and IPV are uneven across countries (Raj et al., 2018; Peterman et al., 2017; Kovacs, 2018). The picture from observational studies examining the link between women's economic circumstances and their current IPV risk is similarly complex (Abramsky et al., 2019; Vyas and Watts 2009). For example, women's employment or working for money has been associated with lower violence in some settings (Kishor and Johnson 2004) but higher in others (Abramsky et al., 2019; Naved and Persson 2005; Lenze and Klasen 2017). Other studies from a range of countries indicate no association between women's employment or income and IPV [Lenze and Klasen 2017; Naved and Persson 2005]. It is now widely accepted that associations between a woman's economic circumstances and IPV risk differ according to the economic indicator used, type of violence and setting, though empirical evidence to explain this variation and unpack mechanisms of association is limited (Abramsky et al., 2019; Gram et al., 2019a; Vyas and Watts 2009).

Since there has been variations and disparities in the link between a woman's economic empowerment and her risk of intimate partner violence, it is important therefore to understand and explore the respective labour force participation of women and their associated risk of IPV or

no risk. This would aid in the development of suitable and appropriate intervention components to counteract potential harms arising from the different interventions. This paper, aim to explore the impact of women labour force participation on IPV among women in Nigeria using data set from Nigeria Demography and Health Survey (NDHS, 2018).

## Methods

### Study design

The data set used in this study was obtained from Nigeria Demography and Health Survey (NDHS, 2018) which is cross sectional and provide information on fertility, childhood, adult mortality, family planning, sexual and reproductive issues. In this study, married women who participate in labour force and had at least a live birth five years preceding the survey were analyzed. A weighted sample of 19,732 married women of reproductive ages was analyzed in the study.

### Variables

The outcome variable in the study was intimate partner violence. This was generated from information on the respondents who experienced intimate partner violence (physical, sexual and emotional) five years preceding the survey. The outcome variables were divided into two categories (not experienced) which were coded as 0 and (experienced) coded as 1.

The explanatory variables were divided into two. Labour force participation variables (employment status, types of occupation, types of employer and employment earning) and Socio-demographic factors (age of respondents, level of education, region, wealth index, place of residence and religion practiced by the respondents). Maternal age groups of respondents were re-grouped as 15-19 years, 20-34 years and 45-49 years.

### Statistical analysis

The study made used of Stata version 14 to perform statistical analyses across all levels. At the univariate level, frequency distribution was used to describe the labour force participation characteristics and socio-demographic factors. Chi-square statistic was used to examine the relationship between the explanatory variables and outcome variables. Statistical significance was set at 0.05. At the multivariate level, logistic regression was used to analyze the relationship pattern between outcome variables and explanatory variables. The justification for this technique was that the outcome variables were dichotomous i.e. (0 for (not-experienced) and 1 for (experienced)).

### Results

Table 1 shows that 70% of the respondents were working. Most of the respondents 57% were into trade. Majority, 78% of the respondents were self-employed.

**Table 1: Percentage distribution of respondents by labour force participation**

<b>Labour Force Participation</b>	<b>Frequency (N=19,732)</b>	<b>Percentage 100%</b>
<b>Employment status</b>		
Not-working	8,389	30%
Working	19,732	70%
<b>Types of Occupation</b>		
Manufacture	915	5%
Professional	1,935	10%

Sales	11,170	57%
Administrative	1,657	8%
Agriculture	4,055	20%
<b>Employer</b>		
Family	2,451	13%
Someone	1,870	9%
Self-employ	15,411	78%
<b>Employment Earning</b>		
Not-paid	2,765	14%
Cash-only	14,667	74%
Cash and in-kind	2,116	11%
In-kind-only	184	1%

Source: Author’s work (2020)

Table 2 shows percentage distribution of respondents by socio-demographic factors. More than half 51% of the respondents were between ages 20-34 years. More than half (56%) of the respondents reside in rural

areas. In addition, majority of the respondents (28%) were from the North-West and Islam (53%) was the dominated religion practiced.

**Table2 Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Socio-demographic Factors**

Socio-demographic factors	Frequency (N= 19,732)	Percentage 100
<b>Age of respondents</b>		
15-19	692	4%
20-34	10,082	51%
35-49	8,958	45%
<b>Education Level</b>		
No education	7,535	38%
Primary	3,479	18%
Secondary	6,449	33%
Higher	2,269	11%
<b>Wealth Index</b>		
Poorer	3,460	18%
Poor	3,932	20%
Middle	3,882	20%
Rich	4,003	20%
Richest	4,456	22%
<b>Place of Residence</b>		
Urban	8,679	44%
Rural	11,053	56%
<b>Geographic Region</b>		
North Central	3,044	15%
North East	3,006	15%
North West	5,430	28%
South East	2,306	12%
South South	2,034	10%
South West	3,912	20%

**Religion**

Traditional	130	1%
Christian	9,115	46%
Islam	10,487	53%

**Source: Author’s work (2020)**

Table 3 shows percentage distribution of respondents by intimate partner violence, 32% of the respondents had experienced emotional violence, 7% experienced sexual violence while 8% experienced physical violence. Table 4 present the bivariate relationship between the outcome variables and explanatory variables. Employment status, types of occupation and type of employer were found to be positively associated with emotional violence. Table 5 present the bivariate relationship between the outcome variables and explanatory variables. Employment status was not

associated with sexual violence. Types of occupation was positively associated with sexual violence. Type of employer was also found not associated with sexual violence. Table 6 present the bivariate relationship between the dependent variables and independent variables. Employment status was associated with physical violence. Types of occupation was positively associated with physical violence. Type of employer was also found not associated with physical violence. Also, there was a relationship between employment

**Table3: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Intimate partner violence**

IPV Variables	Frequency (N=27,176)	Percentage 100%
<b>Emotional</b>		
No	3,928	68%
Yes	1,866	32%
<b>Sexual</b>		
No	5,419	93%
Yes	375	7%
<b>Physical</b>		
No	5,304	92%
Yes	490	8%

**Source: Author’s work (2020)**

**Table4 Relationship Between Labour Force Participation and Emotional Violence**

Variables	Experience	Not-experience	Chi-square value	p-value
<b>Employment Status</b>			<b>21.02</b>	<b>0.002</b>
Not-working	(630) 27%	(1705) 73%		
Working	(1866) 32%	(3928) 68%		

<b>Types of Occupation</b>			<b>99.01</b>	<b>0.000</b>
Manufacture	(106) 32%	(225) 68%		
Professional	(149) 23%	(499) 77%		
Administrative	(983) 29%	(2357) 71%		
Sales	(179) 32%	(375) 68%		
Agriculture	(519) 43%	(689) 57%		
<b>Employer</b>			<b>22.92</b>	<b>0.000</b>
Family	(286) 34%	(470) 62%		
Someone else	(161) 26%	(3210) 64%		
Self-employed	(1488) 32%	5569 (48%)		
<b>Employment earning</b>			<b>46.69</b>	<b>0.000</b>
Not-paid	(351) 42%	(490) 58%		
Cash only	(1349) 30%	(3180) 70%		
Cash and in- kind	(221) 33%	(439) 67%		
In-kind only	(14) 28%	(36) 72%		

Significant at p<0.05

**Table 5 Relationship Between Labour Force Participation and Sexual Violence**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Not-experience</b>	<b>Chi-square value</b>	<b>p-value</b>
<b>Employment Status</b>			<b>0.5572</b>	<b>0.5284</b>
Not-working	(141) 6%	(2194) 94%		
Working	(1866) 32%	(3928) 68%		
<b>Types of Occupation</b>			<b>21.89</b>	<b>0.0011</b>
Manufacture	(24) 7%	(307) 93%		
Professional	(20) 4%	(627) 96%		
Administrative	(206) 6%	(3134) 94%		
Sales	(40) 7%	(515) 93%		
Agriculture	(103) 9%	(1105) 91%		
<b>Employer</b>			<b>5.7841</b>	<b>0.0866</b>
Family	(51) 7%	(706) 93%		
Someone else	(26) 4%	(600) 96%		
Self-employed	(316) 7%	(4382) 91%		
<b>Employment earning</b>			<b>46.69</b>	<b>0.000</b>
Not-paid	(73) 9%	(768) 91%		
Cash only	(275) 6%	(4255) 94%		
Cash and in- kind	(41) 6%	(620) 94%		
In-kind only	(5) 10%	(45) 90%		

Significant at p<0.05

**Table 6 Relationship Between Labour Force Participation and Physical Violence**

Variables	Experience	Not-experience	Chi-square value	p-value
<b>Employment Status</b>			<b>20.24</b>	<b>0.001</b>
Not-working	(129) 6%	(2206) 94%		
Working	(490) 10%	(5304) 90%		
<b>Types of Occupation</b>			<b>21.89</b>	<b>0.001</b>
Manufacture	(24) 7%	(307) 93%		
Professional	(20) 4%	(627) 96%		
Administrative	(206) 6%	(3134) 94%		
Sales	(40) 7%	(515) 93%		
Agriculture	(103) 9%	(1105) 91%		
<b>Employer</b>			<b>5.7841</b>	<b>0.0866</b>
Family	(51) 7%	(706) 93%		
Someone else	(26) 4%	(600) 96%		
Self-employed	(316) 7%	(4382) 91%		
<b>Employment earning</b>			<b>46.69</b>	<b>0.000</b>
Not-paid	(73) 9%	(768) 91%		
Cash only	(275) 6%	(4255) 94%		
Cash and in-kind	(41) 6%	(620) 94%		
In-kind only	(5) 10%	(45) 90%		

**Significant at p<0.05**

earning and physical violence. Table 7 present odds ratio from logistic regression analysis, assessing relationship between emotional violence and labour force participation. employment status, types of occupation and employment earning were significant associated with emotional violence. Respondents who were working (49.6%) were more likely to experienced emotional violence compared with respondents who were not working (OR: 1.4960; 95% C.I: 1.0796-2.0729). More so, respondents who were into agriculture occupation (46.2%) were more likely to experienced emotional violence compared with respondents who were into

manufacture (OR: 1.4626; 95% C.I: 1.0406-2.0557). Likewise, the odds ratio of experienced emotional violence decreased among employment earning. For instance, women who were paid in cash (23.4%) were less likely to experienced emotional violence compared with respondents who were not paid (OR: 0.7668; 95% C.I: 0.6055-0.9710). On the other hands, types of employer did not reveal significant relationship with emotional violence. Respondents who were employed by the family members (8.2%) were less likely to experienced emotional violence compared with respondents who were not paid (OR: 0.9189; 95% C.I: 0.7527- 1.1217).

**Table 7 Assessing the Relationship between Emotional Violence and Labour Force Participation.**

Variables	Odds Ratio	p-value	95% C.I
<b>Employment status</b>			

Not-working	RC		
Working	1.4960	0.016	1.0796-2.0729
<b>Occupation</b>			
Manufacture	RC		
Professional	0.6451	0.032	0.4327- 0.9619
Administrative	0.8929	0.477	0.6534- 1.2202
Sales	1.0416	0.817	0.7380- 1.4700
Agriculture	1.4626	0.029	1.0406-2.0557
<b>Type of Employer</b>			
Someone else	RC		
Family	0.9161	0.630	0.6413-1.3087
Self-employ	0.9189	0.405	0.7527-1.1217
<b>Employment Earning</b>			
Not-paid	RC		
Cash only	0.7668	0.028	0.6055-0.9710
Cash and in-kind	0.7642	0.046	0.5869-0.9950
In-kind only	0.4683	0.063	0.2104-1.0420

**Note: ref is reference category \*\*p<0.001, p<0.05, 95% confidence interval**

Table 8 present odds ratio from logistic regression analysis, assessing relationship between sexual violence and labour force participation. Types of occupation were significant associated with sexual violence. Respondents who were into professional occupation (59.9%) were less likely to experienced sexual violence compared with respondents who were into manufacture

occupation (OR: 0.4015; 95% C.I: 0.2038-0.7909). On the other hands, employment earning did not reveal significant relationship with sexual violence. Respondents who were paid in-kind only (13.3%) were more likely to experienced sexual violence compared with respondents who were not paid (OR: 1.1336; 95% C.I: 0.4147- 3.0985).

**Table 8 Assessing the Relationship between Sexual Violence and Maternal Labour Force Participation.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Odds Ratio</b>	<b>p-value</b>	<b>95% C.I</b>
<b>Occupation</b>			
Manufacture	RC		
Professional	0.4015	0.008	0.2038- 0.7909
Administrative	0.8450	0.491	0.5227- 1.3660
Sales	0.9897	0.971	0.5617- 1.7438
Agriculture	1.1160	0.706	0.6311- 1.9736
<b>Employment Earning</b>			
Not-paid	RC		



Cash only	0.8110	0.233	0.5748- 1.1443
Cash and in-kind	0.7223	0.129	0.4747- 1.0992
In-kind only	1.1336	0.807	0.4147- 3.0985

**Notes: ref is reference category \*\*p<0.001, p<0.05, 95% confidence interval.**

Table 9 present odds ratio from logistic regression analysis, assessing relationship between physical violence and labour force participation. Types of occupation and employment earning were significant associated with physical violence. Respondents who were into professional occupation (67.1%) were less likely to experienced physical violence compared with manufacture occupation (OR: 0.3286; 95% C.I: 0.1781- 0.6063). Likewise,

respondents who were paid in-kind only (46.5%) were thrice more likely to experienced physical violence compared with not paid (OR: 3.4656; 95% C.I: 1.7491- 6.8668). On the other hands, employment status did not reveal significant relationship with physical violence. Respondents who were working (7.3%) were less likely to experienced physical violence compared with not working (OR: 0.9269; 95% C.I: 0.5898-1.4567).

**Table 9 Assessing the Relationship between Physical Violence and Labour Force Participation.**

Variables	Odds Ratio	p-value	95% C.I
<b>Employment status</b>			
Not-working	RC		
Working	0.9269	0.742	0.5898-1.4567
<b>Occupation</b>			
Manufacture	RC		
Professional	0.3286	0.000	0.1781- 0.6063
Administrative	0.7078	0.148	0.4430- 1.1308
Sales	0.7345	0.267	0.4258- 1.2668
Agriculture	1.1526	0.571	0.7048- 1.8849
<b>Employment Earning</b>			
Not-paid	RC		
Cash only	0.8035	0.137	0.6022- 1.0721
Cash and in-kind	0.7687	0.161	0.5320- 1.1106
In-kind only	3.4656	0.000	1.7491- 6.8668

**Notes: ref is reference category \*\*p<0.001, p<0.05, 95% confidence interval.**

**Discussion**

This paper, aim to explore the impact of women labour force participation on IPV among women in Nigeria. From this study,

27% of women who were not employed experience emotional violence while substantial part of the respondents (32%) who belong to the working class, experience emotional violence. Emotional violence is

significantly high in all the labour force with the highest in the agricultural sector. It was also observed that the percentage of women who experience emotional violence were more (34%) among women whose employers are family members. Studies have shown that the increase in risk of IPV is attributed to a 'male backlash' which is due to the fact that as women gain more economic autonomy, men who feel that their authority is being challenged may increase their use of violence as a means of reasserting their control (Abramsky et al., 2019; Eswaran and Malhotra, 2011; Krishnan et al., 2010). It is suggested that whether or not such a backlash occurs may depend in large part on social norms (Abramsky et al., 2019; Koenig et al., 2003). It is hypothesised that in settings where women don't commonly work outside the home, their entry into work may increase marital tensions and risk of IPV due to social norms about the acceptability of women's employment (Vyas and Watts, 2009). There may also be negative impacts of women's employment on their well-being by leading to more domestic violence, as studies indicate that women's employment increases spousal violence, since husbands see their role as breadwinners undermined (Lenze and Klasen, 2017; Gage and Thomas, 2017).

Also, significant proportion of the respondents (32%) that belong to the working-class experience sexual violence compared with just 6% who do not experience. There were cases of sexual violence across the different labour force but the highest percentage were found in the agriculture sector (9%). Though the percentage of women who experience physical violence are not high but it should not be overlooked. Among the respondents, 10% of the women who are employed experience physical violence compared to 6% of the respondents who do not

experience physical violence. It was observed that physical violence was reported across all the labour force sectors with the highest reported case of 9% in the agricultural sector. Social norms related to IPV acceptability and to acceptability of women's employment also differ by country and context, and appear to affect observed associations between economic empowerment and IPV (Raj et al., 2018). For example, women's income generation in contexts where norms do not support women's employment may not be protective against IPV (Heise and Kotsadam, 2015). Additionally, the risk of IPV may increase if men use violence as an instrument to disturb women's market-oriented activity, take away women's income or take authority over managing it (Hidrobo et al., 2016).

Overall, this study revealed that the percentage of women who experience sexual violence and emotion violence is high among the employed compared to the unemployed which calls for quick intervention because people believe that empowering women would reduce the menace of IPV but this study reveals that more is needed than just empowering women to achieve desirable results. It was also observed throughout the study and across the different labour force that intimate partner violence is more among women in the agriculture sector compared to all the other sectors. This study suggests that special intervention and more attention should be paid on women in agriculture in order to put an end to IPV in the sector, as this study revealed that substantial proportion of women in this sector are victims of IPV.

This study suggests that incidence of IPV observed among employed women may be due to power relations between the male and female gender especially in the context of a patriarchal society like Nigeria where

women are seen as second-class citizens and are to submit to their male counterparts even in the face of violence. In traditional societies, IPV seems to be a routine experience among women (Begum & Dey, 2013) whose husbands tend to be violent if their wives fail to meet their demands (Khatun & Rahman, 2012). Also, such violence in many cases seems to be considered acceptable to the victims (Sayem et al. 2012) and except the socially constructed roles, responsibilities and attributes ascribed to being a man or woman be deconstructed there may really be no way forward in curbing the intimate partner violence against women.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

Safeguarding women against violence has various implications not only to the woman herself but also to the society in general. As violence against women would hinder the development of any society due to the fact that they may not achieve their full

potentials and as a result may not be able to contribute meaningfully to societal development. Different school of thoughts have clamored for participation of women in labour force and women empowerment as panaceas to stop intimate partner violence against women. From this study, labour force participation of women does not necessarily stop intimate partner violence as hypothesized, as the incidence of intimate partner violence is still more among women participating in the labour force. It is recommended that mainstreaming gender into the labour force in Nigeria should be highly prioritized with a special attention on the Agricultural sector as this will help to deconstruct gender issues subjecting women to violence. It is also very paramount to sensitize and educate the general public on the damaging effects of intimate partner violence to the victims and the society at large, and most importantly prosecuting the violators will help to curb further violation and victimization of women by their partners.

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