International Journal of Advanced Social Studies
ISSN: 3006-1776 (Print), 3006-1784 (Online)

Research Article

Impact of Economic Status on Attitudes towards Domestic Violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Article History
Received: December 23, 2025
Revised: March 20, 2026
Accepted: March 25, 2026
Published: March 30, 2026

© The Author(s) 2026.

This is an open-access article under the CC BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

*Corresponding Email: usmanyousafzai705@gmail.com

https://doi.org/10.70843/ijass.2026.06120

Usman [1,*], Said Aleemuddin [2], Kainat [3], Habib Ul Hassan [4], Mursaleen Anjum [5]
[1] School of Economics and Trade, Hunan University Changsha, China
[2] Comsats University Peshawar, Pakistan
[3] Women University Mardan, Pakistan
[4] Visiting Faculty, University of Swat, Pakistan
[5] Huaiyin Institute of Technology, Huai'an City, P.R. China

Abstract

This study examines women's justification of wife beating in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Pakistan, focusing on education and household economic status. Using KPK Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2019-2020 data for 26,749 married women, the study applies bivariate analysis and binary logistic regression. Overall, 64.87% of women justified wife beating in at least one specified circumstance. In the adjusted analysis, women from middle- and high-wealth households had 22.4% and 28.3% lower odds of justification, respectively, than women from poor households. A clear educational gradient also emerged: higher educational attainment was consistently associated with lower odds of accepting wife beating. Rural residence was associated with higher acceptance, while media exposure was associated with lower acceptance. The findings highlight education and socioeconomic conditions as important correlates of attitudes that legitimize intimate-partner violence.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Economic Status, Women Education, Women Age, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Introduction

Violence against women remains a major human-rights and development concern, affecting women across social, economic, and cultural settings. More than one in three women are reported to experience physical or sexual violence during their lifetime (Li et al., 2023). A substantial share of this violence occurs within households and intimate relationships, where unequal gender relations and social norms can make abusive behavior difficult to challenge. Domestic violence is therefore not only an individual or household problem but also reflects broader social structures that shape the position of women within families and communities (Johnson et al., 2008). Its consequences extend beyond physical harm to psychological, social, and emotional well-being (Brown, 2009; World Health Organization, 2020).

An important but distinct dimension of domestic violence is its attitudinal acceptance. The actual occurrence of violence and the belief that such violence is justified are conceptually different outcomes, although they may be closely related. Attitudes that legitimize intimate-partner violence can contribute to an environment in which abuse is normalized, tolerated, or treated as a private family matter. Simon et al. (2001) report a close association between attitudes toward intimate-partner violence and experiences of spousal abuse, while evidence from the 1995 Egyptian Demographic and Health Survey showed that many women who had experienced beating regarded it as a normal part of marriage (Diop-Sidibe et al., 2006). Studying attitudes toward wife beating is therefore important for understanding the social conditions under which violence may be accepted rather than challenged.

Women's socioeconomic position is particularly relevant to these attitudes. Education is associated with a lower probability of accepting wife beating, suggesting that schooling may be linked to greater rejection of norms that legitimize violence (Nadeem & Malik, 2021). Economic status may also matter because women's dependence on household resources and their limited access to employment, authority, and public institutions can shape their position within the household. In Pakistan, women's limited opportunities in education, employment, and access to formal support mechanisms have been linked to the normalization of violence through prevailing cultural and social beliefs (Khan & Hussain, 2008). At the same time, social interpretations of patience, endurance, and fate may also influence how abusive relationships are understood and tolerated in some communities (Khan et al., 2021).

These concerns are especially relevant in Pakistan, where domestic violence is often treated as a private family issue and may be tolerated because of prevailing social norms (Chaudhry et al., 2021). Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) provides a particularly important setting for examining the attitudinal dimension of domestic violence. Existing evidence suggests that women in KPK display comparatively high levels of justification of wife beating relative to women in other provinces of Pakistan (Nasrullah et al., 2017). The province also exhibits substantial socioeconomic and educational disparities among women. Such variation makes it useful to examine whether attitudes toward domestic violence differ systematically across women's educational and economic circumstances.

Despite the policy relevance of these attitudes, much of the Pakistan-based literature cited in the existing research has concentrated on domestic violence itself rather than on women's acceptance or justification of wife beating. Previous studies have examined the determinants and experiences of domestic and gender-based violence (Khan & Hussain, 2008; Zakar et al., 2016), while comparatively less attention has been paid to the socioeconomic correlates of women's attitudes toward such violence. Some existing work is also geographically narrow or based on relatively small samples. For example, Khan and Hussain (2008) focused on two areas of Karachi using a small qualitative sample. This leaves scope for analysis based on broader population-level data, particularly for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

This study examines the association between women's education, economic status, and their attitudes toward domestic violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa using MICS KPK 2019–2020. Rather than treating domestic violence and its attitudinal acceptance as interchangeable, the analysis focuses specifically on whether women consider wife beating justified under specified circumstances. It also considers the relationship between socioeconomic and demographic characteristics and these attitudes. The use of a large household survey allows the analysis to move beyond evidence drawn from narrowly defined local samples and to examine socioeconomic differences across a wider population of women in the province.

The study contributes to the literature by directing attention to the social acceptance of domestic violence rather than only its reported occurrence. By examining educational and economic differentials in the justification of wife beating, it provides evidence on how women's socioeconomic position is associated with norms surrounding intimate-partner violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This distinction is relevant for policies aimed not only at responding to violence after it occurs but also at addressing the beliefs and social norms that may sustain its acceptance.

Literature Review

Theoretical Perspective

The ecological framework provides a useful basis for understanding why attitudes toward domestic violence may vary across women and social settings. Originating from Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological approach and later adapted to violence against women by Heise (1998), the framework views gender-based violence as embedded in several interconnected levels of influence. Individual characteristics operate alongside household relationships, community conditions, and broader social and cultural norms. From this perspective, women's attitudes toward wife beating cannot be understood solely as individual preferences; they may also reflect the economic resources, family relations, and social environments within which women live. Individual-level resources such as education and income are particularly relevant because they may be associated with women's exposure to information, economic dependence, bargaining position, and ability to question established gender norms (Heise, 1998; Worden & Carlson, 2005).

Feminist perspectives complement this framework by emphasizing the role of gender inequality and patriarchal social arrangements in sustaining male authority and women's subordinate position. Such approaches view violence within intimate relationships as related to broader social norms governing gender

roles, economic dependence, and household power (Dasgupta, 2000). However, explanations based exclusively on patriarchy have been criticized for giving insufficient attention to variation across individuals and households and to the interaction of gender with socioeconomic and demographic characteristics (Dutton, 2006). The ecological approach is therefore particularly suitable for the present study because it allows women's education and economic status to be considered alongside other individual, household, and contextual characteristics rather than as isolated determinants.

Socioeconomic and Attitudinal Correlates of Wife Beating

Education is one of the most consistently discussed socioeconomic correlates of attitudes toward intimate-partner violence in the literature considered here. Evidence based on MICS data suggests that educational attainment is associated with women's willingness to accept or reject violence. Nadeem and Malik (2021), using data covering approximately 46,000 female respondents, reported that education, household income, cultural norms, media exposure, and spousal age differences were associated with girls' acceptance of intimate-partner violence. Similarly, Thi Thuy Do and Sukontamarn (2024), using Vietnamese MICS data from 2006 and 2011, identified educational attainment, income, occupational status, age, and residence as correlates of women's support for domestic violence. Their findings also indicated a decline in tolerance over time, suggesting that acceptance of violence may change with broader socioeconomic and social conditions.

Other studies reinforce the relevance of education while showing that it operates alongside household and demographic circumstances. Sayem et al. (2012), studying women in disadvantaged areas of Dhaka, found that attitudes toward intimate-partner violence varied with characteristics including women's occupation, partner's education, access to mass communication, age, and duration of marriage. Raj and Silverman (2002) similarly linked endorsement of wife beating with educational disadvantage, financial hardship, unequal household power, and exposure to parental violence, although their study focused on men's attitudes and should therefore be distinguished from research on women's justification of violence. Taken together, these studies suggest that education is closely associated with attitudes toward violence, but its relationship cannot be separated entirely from household resources, exposure to information, and prevailing gender relations.

Economic status represents a related but conceptually distinct dimension. Household income or wealth does not necessarily measure a woman's own control over resources, and higher household economic status should not automatically be interpreted as greater female economic autonomy. The existing literature supports several different dimensions of economic position, including household income, employment, occupational status, perceived adequacy of earnings, economic dependence, and participation in household decision-making. Yildirim et al. (2019), for example, found that attitudes toward domestic violence among married women varied with economic circumstances, household structure, joint decision-making, and age at marriage. Sabri et al. (2013) emphasized the relationship between economic dependency, structural inequality, and women's vulnerability to violence, while Bano et al. (2021), using Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey data, highlighted education and economic status as relevant to women's experiences of violence and prevailing social attitudes.

The relationship between socioeconomic position and acceptance of domestic violence is not necessarily uniform across settings. Sardinha and Catalan (2018), drawing on demographic survey data from multiple countries, reported associations between women's economic rights and the acceptability of domestic violence that do not fit a simple expectation that greater economic resources are always associated with lower acceptance. Such findings suggest that individual or household resources may operate within wider institutional and social environments. This is consistent with the ecological perspective: economic conditions may matter, but their relationship with attitudes is likely to depend on gender norms, household power relations, and the broader social context.

Demographic and marital characteristics also appear relevant. Early marriage is particularly important because it may coincide with lower educational attainment, reduced bargaining power, and greater exposure to traditional gender roles. Using Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey data, Zakar et al. (2016) found that women married before adulthood were more likely to condone spousal abuse, although the associations weakened after socioeconomic and geographic characteristics were taken into account. Nasrullah et al. (2017), also using Pakistani data, reported associations between child marriage, controlling behavior, and spousal violence. The latter study concerns actual violence rather than attitudes toward wife beating, but it provides relevant context for understanding how marriage timing and household power may be connected with women's vulnerability.

Evidence from Pakistan and Research Gap

Pakistan-specific research indicates that attitudes toward domestic violence are embedded in broader cultural, economic, and household conditions. Qureshi (2012) linked women's responses to domestic violence with household power, social norms, and concerns about children. Nadeem and Malik (2021) similarly showed that individual acceptance of intimate-partner violence is associated with cultural approval of violence as well as education, income, and media exposure. Evidence also points to substantial variation in attitudes across population groups and geographic settings. Lowe et al. (2018), in a comparative study, found relatively stronger endorsement of honor-related beliefs among Pakistani respondents than among respondents from the other countries considered in their analysis. These findings suggest that socioeconomic characteristics should be examined within the specific social context in which attitudes toward wife beating are formed.

Existing Pakistan-based research nevertheless leaves several questions insufficiently addressed. Much of the literature cited in the study examines the occurrence, determinants, or consequences of domestic and intimate-partner violence rather than women's attitudinal justification of wife beating. Other studies focus on particular populations, such as young married women, victims of violence, men, or geographically restricted samples. Even where attitudes are considered, education, household economic circumstances, demographic characteristics, and social norms are often examined within different empirical settings rather than specifically for women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

This distinction matters because experiencing domestic violence and believing that wife beating is justified are related but different outcomes. The present study therefore focuses on the latter. Using MICS KPK 2019–2020, it examines how women's educational attainment and economic status are associated with their justification of wife beating, while accounting for relevant socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. By focusing on a province-specific population and distinguishing attitudinal acceptance from the actual occurrence of violence, the study provides evidence on socioeconomic differences in the normalization of wife beating in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Methodology

Data Source and Study Sample

This study uses micro data from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (KPK-MICS) 2019–2020, conducted by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bureau of Statistics, Planning and Development Department, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics provided support for sample design, household listing, and survey weights. Fieldwork was conducted between April and October 2019.

KPK-MICS covers both urban and rural areas across all 32 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including the seven newly merged districts. The survey employed a two-stage sampling design. Within each district, urban and rural areas constituted the main sampling strata. In the first stage, census enumeration areas were selected systematically using probability proportional to size. In the second stage, 20 households were selected systematically from each sampled cluster using household listings based on the 2017 Population and Housing Census. Overall, 23,740 households were selected across 1,187 sample clusters.

Of the selected households, 23,582 were occupied at the time of the survey. The survey identified 40,767 women as eligible for interview, of whom 40,261 were successfully interviewed, corresponding to a reported response rate of 98.8%. The study restricts the present analysis to 26,749 married women aged 15–49 years. The individual woman is therefore the unit of analysis. The precise marital-status restriction and the final regression sample after accounting for missing observations should, however, be verified against the original MICS questionnaire and analytical dataset.

The original MICS survey followed established participant-protection procedures. Respondents were informed that participation was voluntary and that their information would remain confidential and anonymous. The survey obtained verbal consent from respondents, while parental or guardian consent and respondent assent were obtained for individually interviewed participants aged 15-17 years. As the present study relies on secondary survey data, these procedures relate to the original data collection rather than to primary fieldwork undertaken by the authors.

Outcome and Explanatory Variables

The dependent variable measures women's attitudinal justification of wife beating, rather than their actual experience of domestic violence. This distinction is central to the empirical analysis because KPK-MICS does

not provide, in the material supplied for this study, a measure of the frequency of domestic violence experienced by respondents. Instead, women were asked whether a husband is justified in beating his wife under five circumstances: when she goes out without telling him, neglects the children, burns the food, refuses sexual relations, or argues with her husband.

A binary indicator is constructed as:

$$Y_i = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if woman } i \text{ justifies wife beating in at least one circumstance,} \\ 0, & \text{if she rejects wife beating in all five circumstances.} \end{cases}$$

Thus, $Y_i = 1$ represents attitudinal acceptance of wife beating and should not be interpreted as evidence that the respondent has experienced domestic violence.

The two principal explanatory variables are household economic status and women's education. Household economic status is measured using the MICS wealth index, which is derived from information on household asset ownership using principal component analysis. The original five wealth categories are consolidated into three groups: the poorest and poorer quintiles are classified as *poor*, the middle quintile remains *middle*, and the richer and richest quintiles are combined as *rich*. The poor group serves as the stated reference category. Because this measure captures the economic position of the household rather than a woman's personal earnings or control over resources, it is more appropriately interpreted as household wealth status than as women's economic empowerment or financial independence.

Women's education constitutes the second main explanatory variable. The study refers both to years of education and categorical educational attainment. The categorical measure distinguishes women with no formal education from those with formal schooling, with formal education further differentiated into primary, middle, and secondary-or-higher levels. Because the source material does not clearly establish whether years of schooling or educational categories constitute the preferred specification in the final multivariable model, this choice should be reported consistently once the empirical specification is finalized.

The model also includes a set of demographic and socioeconomic covariates. These comprise the woman's age, exposure to mass media, place of residence, functional disability, life satisfaction, husband's age, number of children ever born, and ability to become pregnant. Exposure to mass media is coded as one when a woman reports reading a newspaper or magazine, listening to radio, watching television, or using another stated media source at least once a week, and zero otherwise. Residence distinguishes urban from rural respondents, with urban residence reported as the reference category. Functional disability is represented by a binary indicator of whether a disability is reported. Life satisfaction is measured using a ladder ranging from 0 to 10, where higher values indicate greater satisfaction. The number of children ever born enters as a count variable. The study also includes a binary measure of whether the respondent reports being able to become pregnant.

Women's and husbands' ages are reported as categorical variables in the study. However, the stated intervals (15-24, 24-34, and 34-49 years) overlap at the boundary values and therefore require correction or verification before estimation.

Empirical Strategy

Because the dependent variable takes only two values, acceptance or rejection of wife beating, the study employs a binary logistic regression model. Let P_i denote the conditional probability that woman i justifies wife beating in at least one of the five circumstances. The model can be written as

$$P(Y_i = 1 \mid X_i) = \Lambda(\alpha + \beta_1 Wealth_i + \beta_2 Education_i + \gamma' Z_i),$$

where $Wealth_i$ represents household economic status, $Education_i$captures women's education, Z_i is a vector of demographic and socioeconomic covariates, and $\Lambda(\cdot)$denotes the logistic cumulative distribution function.

Equivalently, the log-odds specification is

$$\ln\left(\frac{P_i}{1 - P_i}\right) = \alpha + \beta_1 Wealth_i + \beta_2 Education_i + \gamma' Z_i.$$

The choice of logistic regression follows from the binary nature of the outcome. The model estimates conditional associations between women's characteristics and the likelihood of accepting wife beating. It does not identify causal effects. In particular, education, household wealth, marital and fertility characteristics, and attitudinal outcomes may share unobserved determinants that cannot be fully addressed using cross-sectional data.

Regression results may be expressed as odds ratios. An odds ratio above one indicates higher odds of accepting wife beating relative to the relevant reference group, whereas an odds ratio below one indicates lower odds. Odds ratios should not be interpreted as changes in probability. For substantive interpretation, average marginal effects or adjusted predicted probabilities may complement the odds-ratio estimates if these quantities are calculated in the final analysis, because they express model-based differences directly in probability terms.

Descriptive and bivariate analyses can be used initially to characterize the sample and document variation in wife-beating attitudes across socioeconomic groups. The multivariable logit specification then assesses whether differences associated with education and household wealth persist conditional on the included demographic and socioeconomic characteristics.

Survey Design and Statistical Inference

The KPK-MICS sampling procedure involves stratification, clustering, unequal selection probabilities, and survey weights. The study reports that districts were stratified by urban and rural residence, enumeration areas were selected using probability proportional to size, and households were sampled within 1,187 clusters. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics also supported the construction of survey weights. These features should be incorporated into the empirical analysis when estimating population-level relationships and associated standard errors. Specifically, the final analysis should identify the appropriate MICS sampling weight, stratum, and primary sampling unit variables and apply the corresponding survey-adjusted estimation procedure. The material supplied does not report the exact variables or commands used for this purpose, so these details should be verified from the KPK-MICS documentation before the methodology is finalized.

The results should be interpreted as conditional associations rather than causal effects. The cross-sectional design does not establish temporal ordering or eliminate unobserved confounding. In addition, the dependent variable captures normative acceptance of wife beating rather than actual victimization, and responses to socially sensitive questions may be affected by social-desirability or reporting bias. These limitations do not invalidate the analysis, but they delimit the claims that can be made from the estimates.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Patterns in the Justification of Wife Beating

The figure 1 summarizes both the overall level and the specific circumstances under which wife beating is justified, together with a regional comparison. Panel A shows that 64.87% of women justify wife beating in at least one of the specified circumstances, while 35.13% reject wife beating in all circumstances. This indicates that attitudinal acceptance of wife beating is relatively widespread in the study sample. Importantly, these percentages represent women's attitudes toward the justification of wife beating, not the actual prevalence or experience of domestic violence.

Panel B disaggregates this overall measure across the five circumstances used to construct the outcome. The highest level of acceptance is observed when a wife argues with her husband (56.68%), followed by neglecting the children (52.73%) and going out without telling her husband (52.63%). Acceptance is lower when a wife refuses sexual relations (36.73%), while burning the food (24.87%) attracts the lowest level of justification. The variation across circumstances suggests that respondents do not view wife beating uniformly; acceptance depends considerably on the situation presented. In particular, behaviors related to perceived challenges to household or marital roles attract higher levels of justification than the food-related scenario.

Panel C places Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in a broader regional context. The reported percentage for Pakhtunkhwa is 52%, higher than Islamabad (32%), Punjab (32%), Sindh (18%), Gilgit-Baltistan (31%), and AJK (31%), but slightly above Balochistan (49%) and below Ex-FATA (66%). The regional distribution therefore suggests substantial geographic variation in attitudes or reported spousal-violence-related outcomes, with Ex-FATA showing the highest reported percentage and Sindh the lowest.

Taken together, the figure shows that wife-beating justification is not only relatively common in the study sample but also varies across specific circumstances and geographic settings. The circumstance-specific results further suggest that women's acceptance is especially pronounced in situations involving marital disagreement, childcare responsibilities, and mobility outside the home.

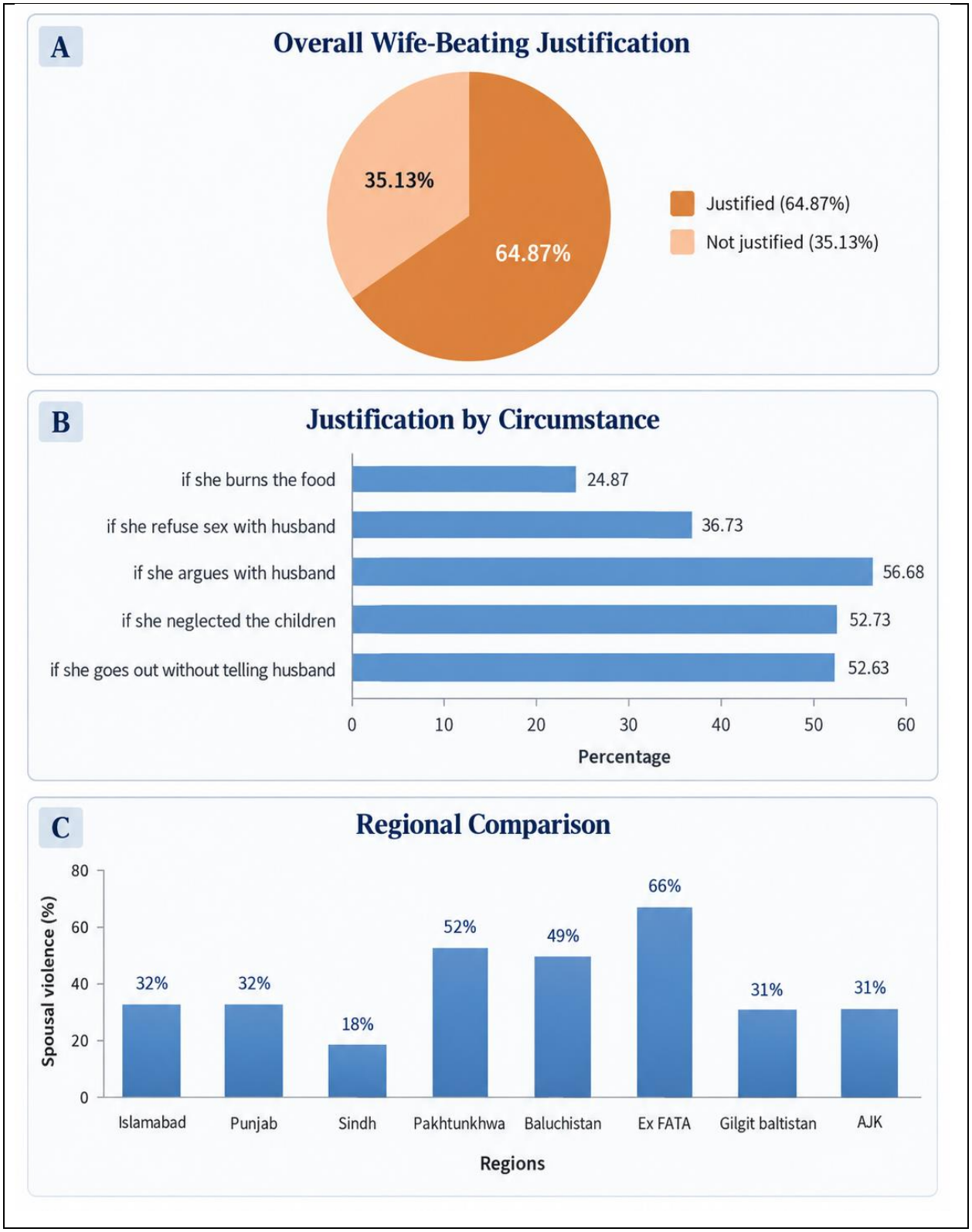


Figure 1. Women's justification of wife beating: overall prevalence, circumstance-specific patterns, and regional comparison

Descriptive statistics

The descriptive results in Table 1 indicate substantial attitudinal acceptance of wife beating among women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Overall, 64.87% of women in the analytical sample justified wife beating in at least one of the circumstances considered, whereas 35.13% rejected wife beating in all five situations. The level of acceptance also varied across the specific circumstances. Justification was most common when a wife argued with her husband (56.68%), followed by neglecting the children (52.73%) and going outside without informing or seeking permission from her husband (52.63%). More than one-third of respondents considered wife beating justified

when a wife refused sexual relations, while 24.87% justified it when food was burned. These percentages measure normative acceptance of wife beating rather than women's actual exposure to domestic violence.

The analytical sample consists of 26,749 women. In terms of household wealth, 47.72% belong to the poor group, 18.87% to the middle group, and 33.41% to the rich group. Educational attainment is relatively low: 67.68% of women report no formal education, compared with 10.73% with primary education, 6.08% with middle education, 7.53% with secondary education, and 7.98% with higher education. The sample is predominantly rural (84.15%), and 24.44% of women are classified as having exposure to mass media. Average life satisfaction is approximately 6.4 on the reported scale, while the average number of children is 3.31.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics.

Variable	Number	(Weighted %age)	Chi-square, *P* value
Overall prevalence	26,749	64.87	
Economic status			$\chi2 = 492.28$, $P < 0.001$
Poorest	12,764	47.72	
Middle	5,047	18.87	
Richest	8,938	33.41	
Women age			$\chi2 = 0.1444$, $P = 0.930$
15-24 years	5,464	20.26	
25-34 years	11,049	41.22	
35-49 years	10,236	38.52	
Women education			$\chi2 = 694.01$, $P<0.001$
No formal education	19,318	67.68	
Primary level education	2,449	10.73	
Middle-level education	1,387	6.08	
Secondary level education	1,730 1,865	7.53	
Higher education		7.98	
Exposure to mass media			$\chi2= 351.94$, $P < 0.001$
Yes	5,745	24.44	
No	21,004	75.56	
Area			$\chi2 = 193.28$, $P < 0.001$
Urban	3,238	15.85	
Rural	23,511	84.15	
Disability			$\chi2 = 27.51$, $P < 0.001$
Yes	628	2.53	
No	26,121	97.47	
Life satisfaction			$\chi2 = 230.53$, $P<0.001$
Average life satisfaction	26,749	6.4	
Husband age			$\chi2 = 0.72$, $P=0.698$

15-24 years	2,184	7.58	
25-34 years	9,541	34.52	
35-49 years	15,569	57.89	
Number of child			$\chi 2 = 142.93$, $P<0.001$
Average number of child	26,749	3.31	
Able pregnant			$\chi 2 = 22.08$, $P<0.001$
Yes	9,796	34.90	
No	16,953	65.10	

Bivariate Associations

The bivariate results in Table 2 show clear socioeconomic gradients in women's justification of wife beating. Acceptance is highest among women from poor households, at 69.84%, compared with 66.10% among women in middle-wealth households and 59.82% among those in the richest group. A stronger gradient appears across educational categories. Wife beating is justified by 68.80% of women with no formal education, declining to 64.05% among women with primary education, 62.08% among those with middle-level education, 55.33% among those with secondary education, and 43.80% among women with higher education. These patterns indicate that both household wealth and women's education are inversely associated with attitudinal acceptance before adjustment for other characteristics.

Similar differences are evident for several other characteristics. Women without mass-media exposure report higher acceptance than those with media exposure (67.48% versus 56.80%), while acceptance is higher among rural than urban women (65.87% versus 59.57%). Women reporting functional disability exhibit a particularly high level of acceptance, at 74.89%, compared with 64.61% among women without reported disability. Women classified as able to become pregnant also show a lower acceptance rate (61.69%) than the comparison group (66.58%). By contrast, differences across women's age groups and husbands' age groups are small in the unadjusted comparisons. These estimates are descriptive associations and should not be interpreted as causal relationships.

Table 2. Bivariate relationship between women attitude towards domestic violence and other explanatory variable.

Variable	Attitude toward domestic violence %age		*P* value
	Yes	No	
Economic status			$P < 0.001$
Poorest	69.84	30.16	
Middle	66.10	33.90	
Richest	59.82	40.18	
Women age			$P > 0.001$
15-24 years	64.56	35.44	
25-34 years	64.82	35.18	
35-49 years	65.09	34.91	
Women education			$P < 0.001$
No formal education	68.80	31.20	
Primary level education	64.05	35.95	

Variable	Attitude toward domestic violence %age		*P* value
	Yes	No	
Middle-level education	62.08	37.92	
Secondary level education	55.33	44.67	
Higher education	43.80	56.20	
Exposure to mass media			*P* < 0.001
Yes	56.80	43.20	
No	67.48	32.52	
Area			*P* < 0.001
Urban	59.57	40.43	
Rural	65.87	34.13	
Disability			*P* < 0.001
Yes	74.89	25.11	
No	64.61	35.39	
Husband age			*P* > 0.001
15-24 years	65.89	34.11	
25-34 years	64.79	35.21	
35-49 years	64.80	35.20	
Able pregnant			*P* < 0.001
Yes	61.69	38.31	
No	66.58	33.42	

Multivariable Results

Table 3 reports four sequential logistic regression specifications. Model 1 includes the two principal variables of interest—household wealth and women's education. Model 2 adds women's age and place of residence, Model 3 introduces disability, mass-media exposure, and life satisfaction, and Model 4 further includes the number of children and the fertility-related indicator. The associations of household wealth and education remain similar in direction and statistical significance as additional covariates are introduced.

Household wealth remains negatively associated with justification of wife beating in the fully adjusted specification. Relative to women in poor households, the odds ratio for women in middle-wealth households is 0.776, corresponding to approximately 22.4% lower odds of justifying wife beating. For women in the upper wealth group, the corresponding odds ratio is 0.717, or approximately 28.3% lower odds. The magnitude changes moderately across specifications but the inverse association persists throughout Models 1–4.

The education results display an even clearer gradient. In Model 4, relative to women with no formal education, the odds ratios are 0.874 for primary education, 0.780 for middle education, 0.634 for secondary education, and 0.432 for higher education. These estimates correspond to approximately 12.6%, 22.0%, 36.6%, and 56.8% lower odds of justifying wife beating, respectively. The ordering is consistent across all four specifications, with progressively lower odds as educational attainment increases. The estimates therefore indicate a strong conditional association between women's educational attainment and rejection of wife beating, although the cross-sectional design does not establish that education itself causes the difference in attitudes.

Several additional covariates are associated with the outcome in the fully adjusted model. Women aged 25–34 have lower odds of justification than those aged 15–24 (OR = 0.889), while the corresponding odds ratio for women above age 34 is 0.745. Rural residence is associated with 22.9% higher odds of accepting wife

beating than urban residence (OR = 1.229). Women reporting functional disability have substantially higher odds of justification (OR = 1.690), whereas mass-media exposure is associated with lower odds (OR = 0.794).

Life satisfaction is positively associated with attitudinal acceptance: a one-unit increase on the life-satisfaction scale corresponds to approximately 8.4% higher odds of justifying wife beating (OR = 1.084). The number of children is also positively associated with acceptance (OR = 1.051), corresponding to approximately 5.1% higher odds for each additional child. Women classified as able to become pregnant have approximately 13.4% lower odds of justification than the reference group (OR = 0.866). These results should be reported as conditional associations without assigning behavioral mechanisms that are not directly tested in the analysis.

The pseudo-R^2 rises from 0.0242 in Model 1 to 0.0347 in Model 4, and all specifications retain 26,749 observations. The reported Wald statistics indicate rejection of the joint null hypothesis for the included regressors. These pseudo-R^2 statistics should not, however, be interpreted in the same way as the proportion of variance explained in an OLS model.

Table 3. Result of binary logistic regression for determinants of domestic violence .

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Socioeconomic status:				
Poor (base)				
Middle	0.766***	0.777***	0.770***	0.776***
	(0.0282)	(0.0287)	(0.0286)	(0.0289)
Upper	0.663***	0.700***	0.707***	0.717***
	(0.0224)	(0.0247)	(0.0256)	(0.0261)
Education:				
No education (base)				
Primary	0.873***	0.854***	0.865***	0.874***
	(0.0412)	(0.0407)	(0.0417)	(0.0423)
Middle	0.776***	0.762***	0.770***	0.780***
	(0.0463)	(0.0462)	(0.0472)	(0.0479)
Secondary	0.624***	0.616***	0.620***	0.634***
	(0.0336)	(0.0336)	(0.0347)	(0.0357)
Higher	0.408***	0.408***	0.415***	0.432***
	(0.0215)	(0.0217)	(0.0231)	(0.0242)
Age:				
15-24 (base)				
25-34		0.960	0.975	0.889***
		(0.0350)	(0.0357)	(0.0344)
Above 34		0.894***	0.904***	0.745***
		(0.0335)	(0.0342)	(0.0341)
Rural		1.250***	1.214***	1.229***
		(0.0519)	(0.0510)	(0.0516)
Disability			1.719***	1.690***
			(0.170)	(0.168)

Exposure to mass media			0.788***	0.794***
			(0.0279)	(0.0281)
Life satisfaction			1.084***	1.084***
			(0.00689)	(0.00689)
Children				1.051***
				(0.00793)
Able to pregnant				0.866***
				(0.0242)
Constant	2.929***	2.515***	1.586***	1.557***
	(0.0599)	(0.136)	(0.106)	(0.108)
Wald chi2	807.89	851.40	1049.82	1117.61
Prob > chi2	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Pseudo R2	0.0242	0.0255	0.0324	0.0347
Observations	26,749	26,749	26,749	26,749

Robust standard errors in parentheses, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Robustness and Heterogeneity Analyses

Table 4 examines whether the main household-wealth and education associations are sensitive to alternative specifications of age and the inclusion of husband's age. The estimated odds ratios for household wealth remain highly stable: the middle-wealth estimate varies only from 0.775 to 0.776 across the three specifications, while the upper-wealth estimate ranges from 0.717 to 0.719. A similar pattern is observed for education. Across the alternative models, the odds ratios remain approximately 0.87 for primary education, 0.77 for middle education, 0.63 for secondary education, and 0.43 for higher education. These results indicate that the central associations are not sensitive to these particular specification changes.

Husband's age is generally not statistically distinguishable from the reference category, although the estimate for husbands aged 25–34 in the third specification is marked as statistically significant at the 10% level (OR = 1.124). This qualification is important because the results do not support an unqualified statement that husband's age is insignificant in every specification.

When women's age is entered as a continuous variable, the reported odds ratio is 0.985, corresponding to approximately 1.5% lower odds of justification for an additional year of age. In the specification incorporating both age and age squared, the reported odds ratios are 0.966 and 1.000, respectively. The rounded odds ratio of 1.000 for the quadratic term is not, by itself, sufficient to establish linearity; a formal joint or nonlinear-term test would provide a more defensible assessment.

Table 4. Robustness check.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Husband's age:			
15-24 (base)			
25-34	1.095	1.092	1.124*
	(0.0653)	(0.0615)	(0.0678)
Above 34	1.038	1.054	1.096
	(0.0706)	(0.0698)	(0.0796)
Socioeconomic status:			
Poor (base)			

Middle	0.775***	0.776***	0.776***
	(0.0289)	(0.0289)	(0.0289)
Upper	0.717***	0.719***	0.718***
	(0.0261)	(0.0262)	(0.0262)
Education:			
No education (base)			
Primary	0.874***	0.869***	0.869***
	(0.0422)	(0.0421)	(0.0421)
Middle	0.779***	0.773***	0.771***
	(0.0478)	(0.0475)	(0.0475)
Secondary	0.633***	0.629***	0.628***
	(0.0356)	(0.0354)	(0.0354)
Higher	0.430***	0.429***	0.430***
	(0.0241)	(0.0240)	(0.0241)
Age:			
15-24 (base)			
25-34	0.882***		
	(0.0385)		
Above 34	0.757***		
	(0.0430)		
Rural	1.228***	1.225***	1.225***
	(0.0516)	(0.0515)	(0.0515)
Disability	1.692***	1.719***	1.711***
	(0.168)	(0.172)	(0.171)
Exposure to mass media	0.795***	0.796***	0.797***
	(0.0282)	(0.0282)	(0.0283)
Life satisfaction	1.084***	1.083***	1.083***
	(0.00689)	(0.00689)	(0.00689)
Children	1.052***	1.056***	1.057***
	(0.00807)	(0.00822)	(0.00829)
Able to pregnant	0.866***	0.863***	0.863***
	(0.0242)	(0.0241)	(0.0241)
Age (continuous)		0.985***	0.966**
		(0.00262)	(0.0148)
Age-squared (continuous)			1.000
			(0.000216)
Constant	1.471***	1.981***	2.669***
	(0.117)	(0.193)	(0.642)

Wald chi2	1121.27	1123.68	1125.28
Prob > chi2	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Pseudo R2	0.0348	0.0349	0.0350
Observations	26,749	26,749	26,749

Robust standard errors in parentheses, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The subgroup analysis in Table 5 suggests potentially important differences by residence and household wealth. Most notably, the association between household wealth and wife-beating justification differs in direction between urban and rural subsamples. In the rural sample, women from middle- and upper-wealth households have lower odds than women from poor households (OR = 0.758 and 0.685, respectively). In the urban sample, however, the corresponding estimates exceed one (OR = 1.321 and 1.263), although both are significant only at the 10% level. This pattern is noteworthy, but separate statistical significance within subgroups does not establish statistically significant differences between groups. Formal interactions between residence and wealth would be required to test whether the urban and rural coefficients differ.

Education shows a more consistent pattern. The inverse association is particularly clear at secondary and higher levels of schooling across residence and wealth subsamples. For higher education, the reported odds ratios are 0.347 in urban areas and 0.469 in rural areas, while the estimates across poor, middle, and rich household groups are 0.416, 0.506, and 0.419, respectively. At primary and middle levels, the magnitude and precision vary more substantially across subgroups. The results therefore support a broadly consistent negative association between higher educational attainment and wife-beating justification, while providing weaker evidence of uniformity at lower schooling levels.

The subgroup results also show that older women generally have lower odds of justification than women aged 15–24, although statistical precision varies across wealth groups for the 25–34 category. Rural residence remains positively associated with justification when models are estimated separately by household-wealth group, with the largest reported odds ratio among poor women (OR = 2.038). Disability is positively associated with justification across all reported subsamples. These subgroup estimates are best treated as exploratory evidence because formal coefficient-equality or interaction tests are not reported.

Table 5. Hetrogeniety analysis.

Variables	Whole sample	Urban	Rural	Poor	Middle	Rich
Husband's age:						
15-24 (base)						
25-34	1.095	1.117	1.090	1.171*	1.019	1.006
	(0.0653)	(0.207)	(0.0690)	(0.102)	(0.138)	(0.106)
Above 34	1.038	1.207	1.013	1.115	0.949	0.964
	(0.0706)	(0.248)	(0.0732)	(0.112)	(0.145)	(0.113)
Socioeconomic status:						
Poor (base)						
Middle	0.775***	1.321*	0.758***			
	(0.0289)	(0.189)	(0.0295)			
Upper	0.717***	1.263*	0.685***			
	(0.0261)	(0.153)	(0.0264)			
Education:						
No education (base)						
Primary	0.874***	1.024	0.854***	0.782**	0.959	0.900

	(0.0422)	(0.132)	(0.0445)	(0.0750)	(0.0949)	(0.0615)
Middle	0.779***	0.822	0.764***	0.777	0.752**	0.794***
	(0.0478)	(0.111)	(0.0530)	(0.125)	(0.0980)	(0.0628)
Secondary	0.633***	0.642***	0.632***	0.536***	0.562***	0.674***
	(0.0356)	(0.0783)	(0.0403)	(0.0775)	(0.0760)	(0.0472)
Higher	0.430***	0.347***	0.469***	0.416***	0.506***	0.419***
	(0.0241)	(0.0409)	(0.0306)	(0.0733)	(0.0765)	(0.0286)
Age:						
15-24 (base)						
25-34	0.882***	0.812*	0.892**	0.838**	0.892	0.929
	(0.0385)	(0.0979)	(0.0418)	(0.0591)	(0.0865)	(0.0635)
Above 34	0.757***	0.591***	0.787***	0.767***	0.778**	0.733***
	(0.0430)	(0.0905)	(0.0483)	(0.0695)	(0.0993)	(0.0658)
Rural	1.228***			2.038***	1.185*	1.113**
	(0.0516)			(0.216)	(0.121)	(0.0560)
Disability	1.692***	1.624*	1.730***	1.443**	1.897***	1.914***
	(0.168)	(0.413)	(0.187)	(0.223)	(0.412)	(0.304)
Exposure to mass media	0.795***	0.880	0.773***	0.846**	0.787***	0.772***
	(0.0282)	(0.0741)	(0.0302)	(0.0622)	(0.0629)	(0.0366)
Life satisfaction	1.084***	1.038**	1.090***	1.108***	1.058***	1.068***
	(0.00689)	(0.0180)	(0.00747)	(0.0107)	(0.0155)	(0.0111)
Children	1.052***	1.060**	1.051***	1.068***	1.049***	1.024*
	(0.00807)	(0.0242)	(0.00857)	(0.0118)	(0.0177)	(0.0144)
Able to pregnant	0.866***	0.611***	0.911***	1.043	0.719***	0.753***
	(0.0242)	(0.0492)	(0.0272)	(0.0441)	(0.0454)	(0.0353)
Constant	1.471***	1.296	1.741***	0.668***	1.562**	1.511***
	(0.117)	(0.291)	(0.125)	(0.0937)	(0.284)	(0.195)
Wald chi2	1121.27	3,238	830.65	261.98	115.61	367.07
Prob > chi2	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Pseudo R2	0.0348	0.0438	0.0297	0.0184	0.0185	0.0324
Observations	26,749	3,238	23,511	12,764	5,047	8,938

Robust standard errors in parentheses, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Supplementary Analysis of Men's Attitudes

Table 6 extends the analysis to a sample of 9,504 men and should be viewed as a complementary analysis rather than part of the primary specification focused on women's attitudes. Household wealth exhibits the same broad direction as in the women's models. In Model 4, the odds ratio is 0.648 for men in middle-wealth households and 0.604 for those in the upper wealth group, corresponding to approximately 35.2% and 39.6% lower odds of justifying wife beating than men in poor households.

The table also appears to indicate an inverse relationship between men's education and wife-beating

justification. However, the education rows in the supplied table are not internally aligned: odds ratios appear on the "Education" heading before the stated no-education reference category, and the reported higher-education estimates duplicate the middle-wealth estimates. Exact education-specific estimates should therefore not be interpreted until the table is checked against the underlying regression output.

Men's age is not statistically significant in the reported adjusted specifications, whereas rural residence is positively associated with justification; the Model 4 odds ratio for rural residence is 1.462. Disability and mass-media exposure are not statistically significant in the reported male models. Life satisfaction is negatively associated with justification (OR = 0.940), implying approximately 6.0% lower odds for each additional unit, while the number of children is positively associated with justification (OR = 1.024). The four male specifications each contain 9,504 observations.

Taken together, the results show that household wealth and, more prominently, educational attainment are systematically associated with women's justification of wife beating. The stability of these relationships across sequential specifications and several subsamples strengthens the descriptive evidence of socioeconomic gradients in attitudes. These estimates remain observational, however, and should not be interpreted as identifying causal effects of wealth, education, or the other covariates on attitudes toward wife beating.

Table 6. Result of binary logistic regression for determinants of husband's attitude towards domestic violence.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Socioeconomic status:				
Poor (base)				
Middle	0.617***	0.636***	0.639***	0.648***
	(0.0367)	(0.0380)	(0.0383)	(0.0390)
Upper	0.530***	0.585***	0.586***	0.604***
	(0.0283)	(0.0331)	(0.0333)	(0.0349)
Education:	0.834**	0.831**	0.832**	0.830**
No education (base)	(0.0626)	(0.0626)	(0.0628)	(0.0629)
Primary	0.715***	0.710***	0.712***	0.717***
	(0.0499)	(0.0499)	(0.0503)	(0.0508)
Middle	0.677***	0.668***	0.665***	0.682***
	(0.0430)	(0.0427)	(0.0432)	(0.0445)
Secondary	0.564***	0.557***	0.554***	0.579***
	(0.0373)	(0.0372)	(0.0381)	(0.0402)
Higher	0.617***	0.636***	0.639***	0.648***
	(0.0367)	(0.0380)	(0.0383)	(0.0390)
Age:				
15-24 (base)				
25-34		0.980	0.977	0.941
		(0.0768)	(0.0777)	(0.0762)
Above 34		0.984	0.984	0.899
		(0.0760)	(0.0771)	(0.0793)
Rural		1.474***	1.468***	1.462***
		(0.0992)	(0.0990)	(0.0992)
Disability			1.199	1.213

			(0.161)	(0.163)
Exposure to mass media			1.007	1.025
			(0.0470)	(0.0482)
Life satisfaction				0.940***
				(0.0107)
Children				1.024**
				(0.0118)
Constant	2.888***	2.030***	1.420	1.947**
	(0.121)	(0.209)	(0.409)	(0.575)
Wald chi2	396.51	428.98	429.09	459.10
Prob > chi2	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Pseudo R2	0.0322	0.0349	0.0350	0.0378
Observations	9,504	9,504	9,504	9,504

Robust standard errors in parentheses, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Discussion

Spousal violence is a pervasive societal issue causing physical and psychological harm across all races, ethnicities, genders, and sexual orientations. Its roots often lie in interconnected community (attitudinal), cultural (traditional gender roles), and educational (lack of education) factors. Scholars have endeavored to pinpoint specific characteristics and hypotheses contributing to marital violence. Research suggests that an individual's attitude toward domestic violence is a significant factor in its perpetuation. In Pakistani society, where women typically occupy subordinate positions, gender inequality and limited divorce options exacerbate the acceptance of marital violence, particularly among less educated women (Ali, 2013; Shair et al., 2024a; 2024b). This study investigates spousal violence-related attitudes among women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan, focusing on the relationship between women's economic status, education levels, and acceptance of spousal violence. Given the prevalent attitudes toward spousal violence in KPK, understanding the link between socioeconomic factors and women's attitudes toward violence is crucial. Our analysis reveals that women's socioeconomic status, as proxies by household economic status and education, significantly influences their attitudes toward domestic violence. Specifically, women with higher economic status are less likely to accept domestic violence compared to those with lower economic standing. Moreover, across all education levels, women's education serves as a deterrent to positive attitudes toward wife beating.

For example, women with primary or middle-level education tend to have less favorable attitudes towards spousal violence. Similarly, highly educated women typically hold negative views on domestic violence. Additionally, older women may be more inclined to accept domestic violence, possibly due to frequent arguments with their husbands, neglect of children, or leaving home without permission. Similarly, in line with other studies, women from poorer areas with limited exposure to mass media are more likely to internalize domestic violence compared to urban counterparts with access to electronic media. These findings align with previous research, such as the observation of permissive attitudes towards intimate partner violence (IPV) among rural women with lower education levels and household affluence (Uthman et al., 2009). Research by Daraz et al. (2023) also suggests that women with lower education levels are more likely to accept domestic violence compared to those with higher education levels. Moreover, in Zimbabwe and Kenya, married females from impoverished families are more susceptible to domestic abuse compared to those from wealthier households, while women from poorer backgrounds are more likely than their wealthier counterparts to experience violence from their husbands or partners (Tran et al., 2016).

It has been proposed that women with lower incomes are at a higher risk of experiencing violence due to their financial limitations. While the precise mechanism through which poverty increases the likelihood of violence remains uncertain, it's suggested that poor socioeconomic status represents a combination of factors that collectively heighten women's vulnerability to violence. This vulnerability could be associated with their attitudes toward violence, a crucial consideration for policymakers aiming to improve public perceptions of

intimate partner violence (IPV) and mitigate violence against women. Women's attitudes toward domestic violence may reflect sociocultural norms and expectations surrounding IPV (Hindin, 2003). Studies conducted in Bangladesh indicate that a significant number of male respondents view spousal violence against wives as acceptable under various circumstances (Naved et al., 2006). Additionally, research by Nayak et al. (2003) suggests notable differences in the prevalence and justification of spousal violence across countries. The empowerment of women, whether through decision-making autonomy or economic contributions, has emerged as a central focus in global legislative efforts and recent studies addressing health outcomes, including spousal violence.

The findings of the men regression model on the impact of socioeconomic status and education reveal the negative relationship with the likelihood of justifying the wife beating. The person with higher socioeconomic status are less inclined to justify wife beating because a person with higher socioeconomic status is often links to better education, which fosters critical thinking and an understanding of gender equality, leading educated men to reject norms that condone violence against women. Secondly, these men usually have better access to resources and information that oppose domestic violence. Socially, men with higher socioeconomic status tend to adhere to progressive norms due to peer influence, promoting egalitarian relationships. Economically, higher socioeconomics status provides stability, reducing the stressors that can lead to domestic conflicts. Finally, men of higher socioeconomics status are often more accountable to legal and social standards, which deters violent behavior. Collectively, these elements contribute to shaping more equitable gender attitudes and behaviors among men of higher socioeconomics status.

The aftermaths of the men regression model on the impact of education reveal the negative relationship with the likelihood of justifying the wife beating. The person with higher education is less inclined to justify wife beating because a person with higher education gain exposure to diverse cultural and social perspectives, enhancing critical thinking and leading to a rejection of violence as a conflict resolution method. Their enhanced cognitive skills improve reasoning, problem-solving, and empathy, making violence less acceptable. Education also instills societal values of equality and non-violence, influences economic stability, and provides awareness of legal rights and consequences. Furthermore, educated men are often part of peer networks that reinforce non-violent norms and provide social support for positive behaviors. Collectively, these elements contribute to educated men's reduced propensity to justify domestic violence, underscoring the critical role of education in promoting gender equality and discouraging violent behavior.

Conclusions

This study examined women's justification of wife beating in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, with particular attention to differences associated with household economic status and educational attainment. Using KP-MICS 2019–2020 data, the analysis shows that acceptance of wife beating remains widespread: almost two-thirds of the women in the analytical sample considered it justified in at least one of the specified circumstances. This finding points to the persistence of social norms that continue to legitimize violence within intimate relationships, while also highlighting substantial variation across socioeconomic groups.

The clearest pattern concerns women's education. Attitudinal acceptance declines progressively with educational attainment, and this association remains stable across alternative model specifications. Women with secondary and higher education exhibit substantially lower odds of justifying wife beating than women with no formal education. Household economic status displays a similar, although comparatively weaker, gradient: women living in better-off households generally report lower acceptance than those from poorer households. These findings suggest that material circumstances and education are closely related to how women perceive the legitimacy of violence within marriage. The association with education is particularly noteworthy because schooling may coincide with greater exposure to information, broader social interaction, and greater awareness of individual rights, although the cross-sectional design does not allow these mechanisms to be established causally. The study likewise identifies increasing education with declining acceptance of wife beating.

Other characteristics also differentiate attitudes. Rural women show higher odds of justifying wife beating than their urban counterparts, while exposure to mass media is associated with lower acceptance. Women reporting functional disability also exhibit comparatively higher acceptance. In the adjusted analysis, older women have lower odds of justification than younger women, underscoring the importance of relying on the multivariable estimates rather than unadjusted interpretations. Some additional associations—particularly those involving life satisfaction, number of children, and fertility-related status—should be interpreted cautiously because their theoretical position and potential endogeneity are less straightforward.

The findings carry several policy implications. Efforts to challenge the normalization of wife beating should place particular emphasis on female education, especially continued schooling beyond the primary level. The consistent socioeconomic gradient also suggests value in policies that improve household economic security while expanding women's access to skills, employment opportunities, information, and decision-making spaces. Media-based awareness initiatives may complement these efforts, particularly in rural and underserved communities where access to information is more limited. The study similarly emphasizes education, economic opportunities, community engagement, and awareness as potential avenues for changing attitudes that legitimize violence.

These conclusions should nevertheless be viewed within the limits of the research design. The analysis is based on cross-sectional observational data and therefore identifies associations rather than causal effects. More importantly, the outcome captures whether respondents consider wife beating justified; it does not measure whether they have actually experienced domestic violence. The analysis is also unable to incorporate several potentially relevant spouse-level characteristics, including husbands' education, employment, and income, in the main women's specification. In addition, MICS data in Pakistan are collected provincially and across different survey periods, limiting straightforward contemporaneous comparison across provinces.

Overall, the evidence indicates that acceptance of wife beating in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is strongly patterned by socioeconomic circumstances, with education emerging as the most consistent correlate. Policies seeking to reduce the social acceptance of intimate-partner violence should therefore address not only violence itself but also the economic, educational, and informational environments within which such attitudes are formed and sustained.

References

Ali, F. (2013). A multi-level perspective on equal employment opportunity for women in Pakistan. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal, 32(3), 289-309.

Bano, S., Zafar, A., Rahat, R., Bano, S., Zafar, A., & Rahat, R. (2021). Socio-demographic factors associated with intimate partner violence (IPV) during pregnancy among women in Pakistan. PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology, 18(08), 5058-5068.

Brown, H. L. (2009). Trauma in pregnancy. Obstetrics & Gynecology, 114(1), 147-160.

Chaudhry, K. A., Khan, T., Shumaila, S., Amer, A., Khalid, R., & Chaudhary, W. (2021). Assessment of domestic violence against women in Pakistan. Journal of Research and Reviews in Social Sciences Pakistan, 4(1), 1138-1156.

Daraz, U., Bial, M., & Ullah, R. (2023). Quantifying the impact of domestic violence on women's physio-psychological health in District Lower Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Journal of Positive School Psychology, 7(3), 382-393.

Dasgupta, S. D. (2000). Charting the course: An overview of domestic violence in the South Asian community in the United States. Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless, 9(3), 173-185.

Diop-Sidibé, N., Campbell, J. C., & Becker, S. (2006). Domestic violence against women in Egypt-wife beating and health outcomes. Social Science & Medicine, 62(5), 1260-1277.

Dutton, D. G. (2007). Rethinking domestic violence. University of British Columbia Press.

Heise, L. (1998). Violence against women. Violence against Women, 4(3), 262-290.

Hindin, M. J. (2003). Understanding women's attitudes towards wife beating in Zimbabwe. Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 81, 501-508.

Johnson, H., Ollus, N., & Nevala, S. (2008). Violence against women worldwide: Setting the context. In Violence against Women. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-73204-6_1

Khan, A., & Hussain, R. (2008). Violence against women in Pakistan: Perceptions and experience of domestic violence. Asian Studies Review, 32(2), 239-253.

Khan, A., Safdar, S., Akram, A., & Ehsan, S. (2021). Understanding male partner violence against married women in Pakistan: A PDHS study. Bulletin of Business and Economics, 10(4), 194-204.

Li, L., Shen, X., Zeng, G., Huang, H., Chen, Z., Yang, J., & Li, H. (2023). Sexual violence against women remains

problematic and highly prevalent around the world. BMC Women's Health, 23(1), 196.

Lowe, M., Khan, R., Thanzami, V., Barzy, M., & Karmaliani, R. (2018). Attitudes toward intimate partner "honor"-based violence in India, Iran, Malaysia and Pakistan. Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research, 10(4), 283-292.

Nadeem, M., & Malik, M. I. (2021). The role of social norm in acceptability attitude of women toward intimate partner violence in Punjab, Pakistan. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 36(21-22), NP11717-NP11735.

Nasrullah, M., Haqqi, S., & Cummings, K. J. (2009). The epidemiological patterns of honour killing of women in Pakistan. European Journal of Public Health, 19(2), 193-197.

Naved, R. T., Azim, S., Bhuiya, A., & Persson, L. A. (2006). Physical violence by husbands: Magnitude, disclosure and help seeking behavior of women in Bangladesh. Social Science & Medicine, 62(12), 2917-2929.

Nayak, M. B., Byrne, C. A., Martin, M. K., & Abraham, A. G. (2003). Attitudes toward violence against women: A cross-nation study. Sex Roles, 49(7), 333-342.

Qureshi, S. (2012). Legislative initiative in the area of domestic violence in Pakistan: Gender approach to the core provisions of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2009. Pakistan Vision, 13(2), 200.

Raj, A., & Silverman, J. G. (2002). Intimate partner violence against South Asian women residing in greater Boston. Journal of the American Medical Women's Association, 57(2), 111-114.

Sardinha, L., & Catalán, H. E. (2018). Attitudes towards domestic violence in 49 low- and middle-income countries: A gendered analysis of prevalence and country-level correlates. PLoS ONE, 13(10), e0206101. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0206101

Sayem, A. M., Begum, H. A., & Moneesha, S. S. (2012). Attitudes towards justifying intimate partner violence among married women in Bangladesh. Journal of Biosocial Science, 44(6), 641-660.

Shair, W., Arshad, M., Asif, M., & Halim, A. (2024a). Exploring the determinants of women's labour force participation in Pakistan. International Journal of Social Sciences Bulletin, 2(4), 2267-2278.

Shair, W., Arshad, M., Roman, M., Nisa, B. U., & Hassan, R. U. (2024b). The impact of education on women's employment choices in Pakistan: Evidence from the Labour Force Survey 2020-2021. Policy Research Journal, 2(4), 2049-2060.

Simon, T. R., Anderson, M., Thompson, M. P., Crosby, A. E., Shelley, G., & Sacks, J. J. (2001). Attitudinal acceptance of intimate partner violence among US adults. Violence and Victims, 16(2), 115-126.

Thi Thuy Do, H., & Sukontamarn, P. (2024). Women's educational attainment and sexual coercion by intimate partners: Ethnic differences in Vietnam. Journal of Population Research, 41(4), 28.

Tran, T. D., Nguyen, H., & Fisher, J. (2016). Attitudes towards intimate partner violence against women among women and men in 39 low-and middle-income countries. PLoS One, 11(11), e0167438.

Uthman, O. A., Lawoko, S., & Moradi, T. (2009). Factors associated with attitudes towards intimate partner violence against women: A comparative analysis of 17 sub-Saharan countries. BMC International Health and Human Rights, 9(1), 1-15.

Worden, A. P., & Carlson, B. E. (2005). Attitudes and beliefs about domestic violence: Results of a public opinion survey: II. Beliefs about causes. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 20(10), 1219-1243. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260505278531

World Health Organization. (2020). Depression. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women

Yildirim, A., Aşilar, R. H., & Avci, İ. A. (2019). Examination of attitudes of married women on domestic violence. Turkish Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care, 13(4), 407-417.

Zakar, R., Zakar, M. Z., & Abbas, S. (2016). Domestic violence against rural women in Pakistan: An issue of health and human rights. Journal of Family Violence, 31, 15-25.