Domestic Violence in Relation to Women Empowerment and Women Household Headship: A Case in Nigeria

Meherun Ahmed¹ Iftekhar Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury*² & Samanta Sharmin Laskar³

¹Department of Economics, Asian University for Women  
E-mail: meherun.ahmed@auw.edu.bd

²Access Academy, Asian University for Women  
E-mail: iftekhar.chowdhury@auw.edu.bd*

³Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)  
E-mail: samanta4092@gmail.com

Domestic Violence against women is very common in both developing and developed countries and is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon. However, global developments have yet to be systematically assimilated into theories around violence against women. This study seeks to examine the associations between domestic violence against women household headship and women empowerment in Nigeria. The study used data from the 2013 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (DHS). Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression method was used to assess the association among the study variables. The analysis showed that domestic violence is usually more where there are women-household headships in case of Nigeria changing the general idea of having less domestic violence in women headed households. There should be strict and effective laws against domestic violence. Men or women whoever is domestically violating another woman should have to deal with legal consequences; otherwise, this trend of domestically violating women will go on forever.

Key words: Domestic Violence, Women Household Headship, Nigeria, Empowerment

INTRODUCTION

Domestic Violence is the abuse of one’s physical or mental health. “Domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender”, and can take many forms, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional, economic and psychological abuse” (Office of Violence Against Women, 2007). However, domestic violence by intimate partners, in particular, is very common in both developed and developing countries (Abayomi, 2014). Throughout the years, women empowerment has also been a very important and interesting issue. “Empowering women and girls with more choices and more freedoms is crucial to achieving a better future for all” (Sen, 2016). Empowerment is highly affected by domestic violence. “Theoretically, violence is a human rights issue, and human rights are fundamental to
values of dignity, equality, non-discrimination and non-interference, and these cut across gender, social, cultural, political, class, religious and geographical issues” (Uzuegbunam, 2016). Empowerment of a woman is depended highly on the bargaining power as well that she has in her household. By bargaining power, we mean to be involved in the decision making process in a household, which might be decisions for herself or for the whole family. Researchers have been interested in how the bargaining-power affects the decision making process if the decisions are made by women versus decisions made by men over men making decisions for women.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the links between domestic violence against women household headship and women empowerment in Nigeria. This paper will depict an image of how domestic violence affects the society and how different factors may influence domestic violence. Household headship for a woman and woman empowerment will mean more bargaining power for a woman. Measuring the bargaining power of women in a household is difficult. Measuring the bargaining power is difficult to calculate because of its multi-dimensionality (Ahmed, 2006). Some early research has been done assuming that the interest of each household member is same (Ahmed, 2006). However, this might not always be the case. Women and men have different views on different matters and it is not necessary that their interests will be same all the time. Household decisions are normally taken by the head of the household. They have a significant influence on the decision-making process in the household. Nigeria is a very male-dominated country and most of the household heads are male. Women are tortured in the name of religion and tradition. So, this study is going to test the impact of women empowerment in domestic violence keeping in mind that the family having more women empowerment has more or less domestic violence. The relation can work both ways. A woman that is empowered is less likely to be domestically violated and on the other hand, a woman that has already suffered domestic violence seeks towards women empowerment to get out of domestic violence. Decreased domestic violence might also lead to women empowerment. Also, it is often “assumed that both women and children suffer greater poverty in households with female heads than in households which conform with a more common (and idealised) male-headed” (chant). If a woman is empowered then it shouldn’t be true and women that face domestic violence and injustice normally move to being alone and start their own family or single parenthood. We have chosen the country Nigeria for our study and have taken data of Nigeria from Demographic Health Survey (DHS) 2013, as women were not usually get surveyed in many countries. Generally, the household head, which most cases are men give the interviews. DHS collects information from women directly; therefore we are optimistic that there will be no biased results. The respondents filling the surveys for the datasets are all women so it is reliable to study the women domestic violence and women empowerment from this data set. Also in countries where domestic violence was most common; Nigeria is one of the countries for which DHS could collect data. It is normally assumed that if a woman is a household head then women in that household become less vulnerable to domestic violence as important decisions are taken by women in the family. This paper will help to shed light to investigate and test the general assumption that domestic violence is lower in woman-headed households.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section II analyses the impact on Domestic Violence caused by different variables and different views in different articles as a literature review. Section III describes the research methodology of the study. The empirical results are
given in section IV and section V concludes the paper along with some recommendations based on this study.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Although both men and women can be abused, most victims are women and typically are victims of domestic violence. “Some historians believe that the history of violence against women is tied to the history of women being viewed as property and a gender role assigned to be subservient to men and also other women” (Alokan, 2013). From the very beginning of human history, domestic violence existed in one house or the other in a society. Developed countries are somewhat changing and having a bit less domestic violence than the developing countries nowadays but then also data doesn’t justify the amount of domestic violence happening in the developing countries. Most of the domestic violence happening in the developing countries go unreported and in this Nigeria is also included. In some cases, children are also victims of domestic violence. “Violence against women in the home is generally regarded as belonging to the private sphere in Nigeria and is therefore shielded from outside scrutiny” (Aihie, 2009). They fear of losing their family and getting divorced. In some cases, they even feel ashamed of sharing the fact that their partners torture them or share the fact that their marriage is not working (Oluremi, 2015). There is a high rate of domestic violence in Nigeria. In Nigeria, many women are brutally treated by their intimate partners who in some cases lead to the death of such women and also beating wives is considered as teaching the wives discipline in Nigeria (Oluremi, 2015).

There are many causes of domestic violence. First of all, a person growing up in a society, where domestic violence happens all the time and domestic violence is seen as a normal thing will eventually think that domestic violence is nothing serious and it is normal to physically violate anyone. He will adapt to the tradition of beating intimate partners and might as well physically violate his partner himself. “Growing up in an abusive environment is what makes a person find the sight of a suspect being beaten or burnt to death, entertaining and enjoyable” (Aihie, 2009). Some men torture their wives to release stress and it is normal in Nigeria. Whether it’s a financial stress or work stress, they release their stress by domestically violating their partners. Sometimes men torture their wives because they cannot trust their partners. It is also a kind of stress for them. They doubt their wives that their wives might have affairs outside of marriage and might leave them and out of that stress and fear they beat their wives. Sometimes, if a man is infertile, he becomes insecure of his married life and fears that his wife will leave him and he wants to transfer the fear to his wife by beating and torturing so that his wife doesn’t leave him. Some men domestically violate their wives in the name of teaching them discipline. On the other hand, some domestic violence is caused only because the one domestically violating is mentally sick. Consuming too much alcohol or drugs might result in losing conscience in oneself and one might create violence. Forcing someone to do something and maintain a certain way of living in the name of religious beliefs and practices in order to manipulate or dominate someone is also a form of physical violence. However, in African countries almost everywhere there is a high rate of domestic violence irrespective of their region, tradition or class.

Domestic Violence has lots of adverse impacts on the society. Starting from children, if a child grows up in an environment where there has been domestic violence, it hampers the child’s mental and emotional state. They might suffer from anxiety and depression. Also, children who
grow up in a society where s/he sees that domestic violence is very common, growing up s/he sees the problems and effects of domestic violence as a normal and common issue. S/he starts to take domestic violence as an everyday thing. It is true for both boys and girls. Boys grow up thinking that it is okay to abuse a woman and girls grow up thinking that it is okay to be abused by their partners. Other negative impacts include health problems like injuries and in some cases chronic sickness. Some people even get hospitalized after being physically violated in Nigeria. Even if some doesn’t get to the extent of getting hospitalized after domestic violence, all of them suffer from mental and emotional sickness. They suffer from fear, anxiety, and stress (Alokan, 2013). The most problematic thing is women who are domestically violated, do not have the courage to leave their partner and start on their own. Most of them are financially so dependent on their partner that they fear to get out and start on their own. “Due to economic abuse and isolation, the victims usually have very little money of their own and few people on whom they can rely when seeking help” (Alokan, 2013). Women are also economically and socially abused if they leave their family and start on their own. “In few cases, when the wife leaves because of life-threatening situation, therapists do not even relax their vigilance after a battered wife leaves her husband. Some data suggest that the period immediately after a marital separation women are treated very badly in a Nigerian Society” (Oluremi, 2015). Domestic Violence can have a damaging effect in the long run too. They might permanently have a chronic disease for all their life from the constant beatings and domestic violence.

Uzuegbunam (2016), on the other hand, has discussed something very different in the article ‘Women in Domestic Violence in Nigeria: Gender Perspectives’. It is analysed in that article women are at risk of domestic violence caused by another fellow woman more than men. “The study revealed that most common perpetrators are the daughters of same family or clan, co-wives of same family or clan, women in politics, women in the same occupation, women in zones of same religious activities” (Uzuegbunam, 2016). This might be true in many cases. Women who suffered violence in their earlier life forms a jealousy inside them if other women are not domestically violated in the same way. In Nigeria, despite different cultures and different religion, the case was the same she added. “Women in Africa, like their counterparts the world over, suffer domestic violence irrespective of age, class, religion or social status” (Abayomi, 2014).

Domestic Violence does not have any positive effect in the society other than creating negative impacts in the short and long run and it is proved. What we going to see is, if there is any relation of domestic violence and woman household headship in Nigeria controlling education level, partner’s education level, age, members existing in the family and religion.

Now-a-days, female household headships are drastically increasing. “Female-headed households (most of which are headed by lone mothers), are rising in number and proportion in most developing regions, currently constituting an estimated 13% of all households in the Middle East and North Africa, 16% in Asia, 22% in sub-Saharan Africa, and 24% in Latin America”(Chant). Household headship and bargaining power can lead to many changes in many welfare measures. Cheryl Doss in his article ‘Intra-household Bargaining and Resource Allocation in Developing Countries’ mentioned that household members bargaining power may influence outcomes in consumption, expenditure, child health, and education, decision-making, violence within the household (2012). However, preferences of a female and male are normally different and
therefore female being the household head might lead to different outcomes than male being the household head. Women may be good in being a household head as they have greater potential for accessing interfamilial support and resources through informal channels and men may be good in being a household head as accessing societal resources is easier for men (DHS). This might not be true always. One person normally develops bargaining power and household headship from possessing more assets and non-asset advantages. This might indicate that a woman being the household head might possess and they can use them in the process of production for other purposes, which would help them to spread out of the family and be involved with outside works rather than just be involved with interfamilial resources. This will bring more money and also freedom for the women which will eventually lead to household welfare. Assets may provide income, both directly through rents and indirectly through their use in production, therefore women with more bargaining power tend to have more assets (Doss, 2012). A woman can be more empowered with more decision-making ability when she is a household head. However, most of female-headed households are single parents. There has been an increase of a large number of single mother families in Nigeria recently due to divorces and deaths of their husbands (Ntoimo and Odimegwu, 2014). There is nothing wrong in being a single parent and raising a kid but sometimes it affects a child’s mental health growing up when sometimes he realizes the things s/he is missing from not having a proper family.

The data that we are going to use to do the study is from Demographic Health Survey, Individual Recode (IR) surveyed only women and therefore getting all the correct data can be confirmed. The household head being the head of the family currently in the time of surveying it is assumed that she is not vulnerable to domestic violence. However, if a household head reports that she suffered from domestic violence, it is assumed that she suffered from domestic violence in her previous life and not as a head of the family currently. Keeping in mind that all the respondents are female in this data, if we take domestic violence as the dependent variable and female household head as independent variable controlling for education level, partner’s education, age, number of members in the family, religion and if we see that the regression coefficient is negative then we can draw a conclusion that women who are not domestically violated before in their life are more strong and able to start a new family where she is the head of the family if the respondent is the head of the family. However, if the respondent is not the head of the family then the negative regression coefficient would also mean there is also less domestic violence in a household headed by a female. On the other hand, if the regression coefficient is negative then we can draw the conclusion that women who have suffered domestic violence before in their life are more likely to start a family on her own and be the head of a household if the respondent is a household head. However, if the respondent is not the head of the family then it might also be proved that there might be a domestic violence over other female members of a family when the household is run by a woman which was also discussed in Uzuegbunam’s (2016) article that it is true that women are more domestically violated by fellow women than they are by men. This might be true because women who have already suffered domestic violence in their previous life become jealous if a woman doesn’t suffer the same kind of domestic violence. Relationships like Mother-in-laws and daughter-in-laws; it is common that if a mother-in-law suffered domestic violence in her previous life when she feels jealous if her daughter-in-law is not domestically violated in the same young age that she was violated.
METHODOLOGY

Data Sources and Study Population

This analysis used data from the Nigeria Demographic and Health Surveys (NDHS). The surveys were conducted in Nigeria in 2013 by the National Population Commission (NPC), with technical and financial support from ICF International through the USAID-funded MEASURE DHS programme. The survey was designed to be representative as well as produce reliable estimates for key indicators at the national level as well as for urban and rural areas, each of the country’s six geographical zones, and each of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The 2013 NDHS employed a three-stage sampling design and used stratified sampling technique. Stratification was achieved by separating each state into urban and rural areas. In the first stage, 893 localities were selected with probability proportional to size and with independent selection in each sampling stratum. In the second stage, one census enumeration area (EA) was randomly selected from most of the selected localities with an equal probability selection. In a few larger localities, more than one EA was selected. In total, 904 EAs were selected. After the selection of the EAs and before the main survey, a household listing operation was carried out in all of the selected EAs. In the third stage of selection, a fixed number of 45 households were selected in every urban and rural cluster through equal probability systematic sampling based on the newly updated household listing.

All women aged 15–49 who were usual members of the selected households or who spent the night before the survey in the selected households were eligible to participate in the survey. Three questionnaires were used for the data collection: the Household Questionnaire, the Women’s Questionnaire, and the Men’s Questionnaire. The household response rate was 97.7%.

In this study, we used data of 38,868 women aged 15–49 years and among those 7110 were female household heads. Ethical clearance was sought from Nigeria Health Service ethics review committee (NHS-ERC) before the surveys were conducted. Individual written informed consent was obtained from study participants before they were allowed to participate in the study. The data were completely anonymous; therefore, the authors of the present study did not have to seek further ethical clearance.

Model Specification

Domestic violence is a conflict between family or household members that naturally involves physical harm, sexual assault, or fear of physical harm. Domestic violence can include physical and sexual abuse, emotional abuse, economic abuse, force and threats, terrorization, isolation, jealousy, and blame. The study has considered weighted domestic violence as dependent variable and six other independent variables as measures of women empowerment. So, examine the associations between domestic violence against women household headship and women empowerment in Nigeria we have used the following model:

\[
\text{Domestic Violence} = f (\text{Sex of household head, Education of the respondent, Partner’s...})
\]
Therefore, this relationship can be modelled by the following linear regression model,
\[ DV_i = \beta_1 + \beta_2 Fhead + \beta_3 Edu + \beta_4 Pedu + \beta_5 Nmem + \beta_6 Rhead + \beta_7 Rage + U_i \]  
(1)

Where,
- \( DV_i \) = Domestic Violence in Nigeria
- \( Fhead \) = Sex of the household head (male or female)
- \( Edu \) = The number of years of education of the respondent
- \( Pedu \) = The number of years of education of the partner
- \( Nmem \) = Total number of members in the respondent’s family
- \( Rhead \) = Whether the respondent is the head of the family or not
- \( Rage \) = Age of the respondent

Here, we have used weighted domestic violence to measure the domestic violence which is the dependent variable of our study. We have also included explanatory variables such as education level of the respondent and partner’s level of education in the model. We expect a negative relation between partner’s education and domestic violence in the family. If a person is educated and is aware of his/her partner’s rights and freedom then it is less likely for that person to violate his/her partner. In developing countries, in most cases, women remain laid off at home to do household chores and men are normally more educated than women to work outside. However, if the household head is a female, in most cases those women are educated and they also choose their partners accordingly who are well educated. When household head and partner, both are educated, it is expected that their children should be also educated. Therefore, it is better for the welfare of the household. We have included age of the respondent as independent variable. As age increases, we assume that there is a negative relation between age and domestic violence as we assume that domestic violence is mostly suffered by children and young women. However, family size also may contribute to the domestic violence; hence total numbers of family members is included in the model.

After running above regression, we are also going to run the same regression adding religion as augmented variable. This will enable us to test whether any certain religion has any impact on domestic violence compared to the other religions.

\[ DV_i = \beta_1 + \beta_2 Fhead + \beta_3 Edu + \beta_4 Pedu + \beta_5 Nmem + \beta_6 Rhead + \beta_7 Rage + \beta_8 Religion + \omega_i \]  
(2)

Where, 'Religion' is the religion of the respondent from different regions of the country as well as other members of the households.

**Statistical Analysis**

The data were analysed using STATA version 12. Descriptive analysis was conducted to examine the background characteristics of the study samples. Ordinary Least Square (OLS)
regression method was used to assess the association between domestic violence against women household headship and women empowerment. Results were considered statistically significant when \( p-value < 0.05 \).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Descriptive Analysis Results**

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics of the sample. The average age of the study participants was 32 years with standard deviation of 6.021.

| Variable                              | Total Observations | Mean | Standard Deviation | Min. | Max. |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|------|--------------------|------|------|
| Weighted Domestic Violence            | 27634              | 1.000| 0.853              | 0.042| 14.362|
| Female- headed household               | 38868              | 0.183| 0.386              | 0.000| 1.000|
| Highest Years of Education            | 38868              | 2.933| 2.556              | 0.000| 8.000|
| Partner’s highest years of Education  | 38868              | 2.285| 2.658              | 0.000| 8.000|
| Number of Members in the family       | 38868              | 6.462| 3.706              | 1.000| 35.000|
| Age of the respondent                 | 38868              | 32.00| 6.021              | 15.00| 49.00 |
| Muslim                                | 38868              | 0.477| 0.499              | 0.000| 1.000 |
| Catholic and Christians               | 38868              | 0.509| 0.500              | 0.000| 1.000 |
| Other Religion                        | 38868              | 0.509| 0.500              | 0.000| 1.000 |

*Source: Author’s own estimation from STATA 12 based on Nigerian DHS 2013 data*

Table 2 denotes the percentage of people according to the region and religion who were participated in the NDHS 2013 survey.

**Table 2: Percentage of people according to Region and Religion**

| Region/Religion    | Muslim (%)  | Catholic & Christians (%) | Other (%) | Total (%) |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| North Central      | 43.03       | 54.74                     | 2.23      | 100       |
| North East         | 76.40       | 22.49                     | 1.11      | 100       |
| North West         | 92.27       | 6.44                      | 1.29      | 100       |
| South East         | 0.18        | 97.98                     | 1.84      | 100       |
| South South        | 2.10        | 96.68                     | 1.22      | 100       |
| South West         | 30.01       | 69.34                     | 0.65      | 100       |

*Source: Author’s own estimation based on Nigerian DHS 2013 data*
From table 2, we can see that in Nigeria, the North East, North West is almost dominated by the Muslims while the North Central, South East, South South and South West are dominated by the Catholic and Christians.

**OLS Regression Analysis Results**

Table 3 represents the estimation results of the OLS regression analysis. In this analysis,

| Dependent Variable: Domestic Violence (DV) |
|--------------------------------------------|
| Method: Least Squares                      |

| Variable | Coefficient | Std. Error | Significance |
|----------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| C        | 0.636       | 0.0189     |              |
| Fhead    | 0.066       | 0.0187     | ***          |
| Edu      | 0.006       | 0.0020     |              |
| Pedu     | -0.025      | 0.0020     | ***          |
| Nmem     | 0.102       | 0.0017     | ***          |
| Rhead    | 0.039       | 0.0236     |              |
| Rage     | -0.006      | 0.0006     | ***          |

R-squared 0.433
Adjusted R-squared 0.432

Source: Output from STATA 12.0.
Note: *** denotes significance at 5% level
Here, all standard errors are heteroskedasticity robust.

From table 3, we can see that partner’s education is statistically significant and contribute to decrease in domestic violence keeping other things constant. This shows that if a partner is educated there is less chance of domestic violence because in Nigeria, most women are domestically violated by their partners. However, results also shows that with every unit increase in age of the respondent on an average there is 0.006 unit decrease in domestic violence. This result suggests that children and middle aged people are more domestically violated in Nigeria. As a person gets older, s/he is less vulnerable to domestic violence as they are less dominated or controlled by someone else. With every unit increase in number of members in a family, on an average domestic violence increases by 0.102 units. This suggests that as the number of family member increases, less attention is given to each member of the family and some of them are domestically violated. In some families, men have two wives and eventually as the rights are shared by two of them, they have less bargaining power than a family with one wife and eventually some of them become victims of domestic violence. Also families having lot of children might not be able to give equal or necessary rights to all the children and as a result some of them become victims of domestic violence.

On the other hand, with every unit increase in female being head of the family, on an average there is 0.066 unit increase in domestic violence. This might suggest two things. The respondent
herself might be the head of the family and she was domestically violated previously in her life and that is why she started a new family, where she is the head of the family now. But for households where the respondent is not the household head, there might be another reason which might break the ideologies and prove that when a woman is the head of the family she domestically violates a woman more than a man and this happens mainly because the head the family has been previously domestically violated and her ideologies set as ‘women has to be domestically violated’ causing from jealousy.

Results also shows that years of education of the respondent and she is head of the family or not are statistically insignificant and has no impact at all on domestic violence in Nigeria.

Table 4: Estimation Results of the Impact of Religion (if Muslim) on Domestic Violence
Dependent Variable: Domestic Violence (DV)
Method: Least Squares

| Variable | Coefficient | Std. Error | Significance |
|----------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| C        | 0.557       | 0.0121     |              |
| Fhead    | 0.093       | 0.0189     | ***          |
| Edu      | 0.014       | 0.0023     |              |
| Pedu     | -0.023      | 0.0021     | ***          |
| Nmem     | 0.101       | 0.0017     | ***          |
| Rhead    | 0.026       | 0.0237     |              |
| Rage     | -0.006      | 0.0005     | ***          |
| Muslim   | 0.099       | 0.0112     | ***          |

R-squared: 0.425
Adjusted R-squared: 0.421

Source: Output from STATA 12.0.
Note: *** denotes significance at 5% level
Here, all standard errors are heteroskedasticity robust.

From the above table 4, we can see that with increase in Muslim Community has a positive effect on domestic violence in Nigeria. This suggests that there is more domestic violence in Muslim families compare to other religion families. Reasons for this might be numerous. A lot of the Muslim men have more than two wives in Nigeria which decreases the bargaining power of each woman. Also in the name of Islamic religious sake, women are restricted in many aspects and they are the victims of domestic violence.
Table 5: Estimation Results of the Impact of Religion (if Catholic & Christian) on Domestic Violence
Dependent Variable: Domestic Violence (DV)
Method: Least Squares

| Variable                  | Coefficient | Std. Error | Significance |
|---------------------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| C                         | 0.656       | 0.0019     |              |
| Fhead                     | 0.094       | 0.0189     | ***          |
| Edu                       | 0.014       | 0.0022     |              |
| Pedu                      | -0.023      | 0.0023     | ***          |
| Nmem                      | 0.101       | 0.0017     | ***          |
| Rhead                     | 0.026       | 0.0236     |              |
| Rage                      | -0.006      | 0.0005     | ***          |
| Catholic & Christian      | -0.102      | 0.0113     | ***          |

R-squared 0.436
Adjusted R-squared 0.433

Source: Output from STATA 12.0.
Note: *** denotes significance at 5% level
Here, all standard errors are heteroskedasticity robust.

From the above table 5, we can see that with every unit increase in Catholic and Christian Community, on an average there is 0.102 unit decrease in domestic violence keeping other things constant. This means that there is not much domestic violence in Catholic and Christian families in Nigeria.

Table 6: Estimation Results of the Impact of Other Religion on Domestic Violence
Dependent Variable: Domestic Violence (DV)
Method: Least Squares

| Variable                  | Coefficient | Std. Error | Significance |
|---------------------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| C                         | 0.636       | 0.0189     |              |
| Fhead                     | 0.067       | 0.0187     | ***          |
| Edu                       | 0.006       | 0.0021     | ***          |
| Pedu                      | -0.025      | 0.0020     | ***          |
| Nmem                      | 0.102       | 0.0169     | ***          |
| Rhead                     | 0.039       | 0.0236     |              |
| Rage                      | -0.006      | 0.0006     | ***          |
| Other Religion            | 0.0223      | 0.0113     |              |

R-squared 0.436
Adjusted R-squared 0.433

Source: Output from STATA 12.0.
Note: *** denotes significance at 5% level, Here, all standard errors are heteroskedasticity robust.
Table 6 shows that variable such as ‘other religion’ is statistically insignificant and has no impact on domestic violence keeping other things constant. This indicates that there is no domestic violence in other religious families in Nigeria.

There are a number of strengths and weakness associated with this study. One of the main strengths is the representative nature of the data used in the analysis. This means that the findings of the study can be generalised to all women in Nigeria. To the best of the authors’ knowledge, this is the first study in Nigeria to have used nationally representative data to investigate the relationship between domestic violence against woman empowerment and women-headed household.

A limitation of this study is the fact that the data are from a cross-sectional study, and a causal relationship between domestic violence, women household headship and women empowerment cannot be established. Therefore, the conclusions contained in this paper are based on associations between the explanatory and outcome variables, rather than causal relationships.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Domestic violence has one of the worst impacts on women empowerment. Female household headship, on the other hand, might lead to women empowerment giving a woman more freedom and decision-making power. However, in a country like Nigeria female-headed households are mainly single parents which have some negative sides too. It might affect a child’s mental health and create depression and anxiety when s/he sees the outer world and realises what s/he is missing in life not having a proper family. On the other hand, findings of this study show that female-headed household is significant and positively related to the domestic violence. This might lead to two different scenarios. First is, women who are head of the families now were domestically violated previously in their lives and that is why they started a new family, where they are the head of different families now. However, the second reason might be a totally different reason for which the regression coefficient is positive. If most of the respondents of the survey are not household heads then it can be said from the result that if a woman is the head of the family, she domestically violates a woman more than a man and this happens mainly because the head the family has been previously domestically violated and out of jealousy, it is not possible for her to tolerate women being happy at the same young age when they were domestically violated previously. We can see that domestic violence hampers human brain so much that it creates jealousy and mental sickness for the long run.

Recommendations to solving this problem might be enhancing woman education. If a woman is well educated and independent then she will be aware of all the laws against domestic violence and take proper action when someone tries to domestically violate her. And even if someone does, she can go out of that relationship and start on her own and not be dependent on anyone else. There should be strict laws against domestic violence and those laws should be effective as well so that anyone seeking for help by law should get help. Also, there might be counseling sessions on how to respect their partners and make a marriage workout rather than domestic violence. On top of that hospitals should admit a domestically violated person immediately and not make a more difficult situation for the victim by refusing treatment.
Religious leaders should also promote a healthy and happy married life and discourage domestic violence. Last but not the least ‘Domestic Violence’ should be seen as a crime and not as a socially accepted issue.

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