

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND TOLERANCE FOR INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: A CASE STUDY OF WOMEN IN THE PESHAWAR DISTRICT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN

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DOI:<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17570000>

Keywords

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), Women's Tolerance, Economic Empowerment, Early Marriage, Religiosity, Patriarchy, Pakistan

Article History

Received: 18 September 2025

Accepted: 28 October 2025

Published: 10 November 2025

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Abstract

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) remains a critical social and developmental issue in Pakistan, shaped by economic constraints, cultural norms, and gendered power relations. This study investigates the determinants of women's tolerance toward IPV in the Peshawar district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, focusing on women's economic dependence and independence, education, religiosity, male dominance, early marriage, and family honor as underlining drivers. Guided by non-cooperative bargaining and male backlash theories, the analysis uses binary logistic regression on survey data from 424 women. Results show that economic dependence significantly increases women's tolerance of IPV, reinforcing cycles of vulnerability. Interestingly, economic independence also raises tolerance, highlighting a paradox of empowerment within patriarchal contexts where women's autonomy may provoke resistance. Early marriage reduces tolerance, suggesting the influence of family and community oversight. Other socio-cultural variables such as education, religiosity, male dominance, and family honor are statistically insignificant. The findings underscore that tolerance of IPV stems from the interaction of economic and socio-cultural factors rather than any single determinant. The study concludes that economic empowerment alone cannot reduce IPV tolerance unless complemented by cultural change, stronger legal frameworks, and awareness of women's rights, offering insights for policymakers in Pakistan and similar contexts.

Introduction

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) remains a pervasive global challenge, undermining women's physical safety, psychological well-being, and socioeconomic advancement. The World Health Organization (2021) reports that nearly one in three women worldwide experiences physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner during her lifetime. Beyond constituting a fundamental violation of human rights, IPV limits women's

participation in education, employment, and social life, thereby impeding progress toward gender equality and sustainable development (Diallo & Voia, 2016; Vyas et al., 2015). In developing societies such as Pakistan, IPV is deeply embedded in patriarchal traditions and cultural structures that normalize violence and discourage women from seeking justice (Khalid & Choudhry, 2021). Women are often expected to be patient, obedient, and forgiving to preserve family honor

and social harmony (Amir-ud-Din et al., 2021). Such expectations constrain women's autonomy, reinforce dependency, and perpetuate tolerance for abuse, making IPV a multifaceted issue influenced by economic, religious, and cultural dynamics.

Economic empowerment has received considerable attention as a potential mechanism to reduce IPV and women's tolerance toward it. Classical economic theories, particularly the non-cooperative bargaining framework, suggest that financially independent women hold stronger bargaining power within households, which may reduce their vulnerability to violence and increase their ability to leave abusive relationships (Farmer & Tiefenthaler, 1996; Tauchen et al., 1991; Vyas & Watts, 2009). Conversely, economically dependent women who are victims of IPV are less likely to separate from their partner. This results in a positive association between economic dependence and incidents of violence against them (Basu & Famoye, 2004). However, empirical studies in Pakistan and South Asia reveal mixed evidence. While economic empowerment can enhance autonomy, it may also challenge traditional gender hierarchies and provoke male backlash, thereby intensifying household tension (Naqvi et al., 2011). The male backlash theory explains this paradox by suggesting that when men perceive women's empowerment as a threat to their authority, they may respond with aggression to reassert control (Paul, 2016). Hence, the impact of women's economic independence on IPV is context-specific and shaped by prevailing gender norms.

In addition to economic factors, religiosity and cultural traditions profoundly influence women's attitudes toward IPV. Religious values emphasizing justice and compassion may discourage violence; however, when intertwined with patriarchal interpretations, they can justify women's subordination and tolerance of abuse (Douki et al., 2003; Warren, 2015). Cultural constructs such as male dominance, family honor, and early marriage further reinforce gender inequality by defining women's worth through obedience and sacrifice (Begum et al., 2015; Ceylan-Batur et al., 2023). Similarly, education

plays an important role in reducing tolerance for IPV by improving women's awareness, decision-making power, and understanding of their rights (Diallo & Voia, 2016; Rani & Bonu, 2009). Yet, in conservative settings where social restrictions limit women's mobility and employment opportunities, education alone may not fully protect them from violence (Eze-Ajoku et al., 2022).

In Pakistan, particularly in the Peshawar district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), these economic and socio-cultural dimensions are deeply interwoven. The region's conservative social structure, low literacy rates, and limited female labor force participation have contributed to the persistence of IPV as both a private and socially tolerated issue (Jan et al., 2021). Despite ongoing legal and policy interventions, limited empirical research explores how economic independence, religiosity, male dominance, early marriage, and education collectively shape women's tolerance toward IPV in this region.

Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to examine the determinants of women's tolerance of IPV in the Peshawar district of KP, drawing on the theoretical foundations of the non-cooperative bargaining and male backlash frameworks. The study's central goal is to investigate how women's economic conditions, whether dependence and independence, religiosity, education, and cultural factors influence their tolerance of IPV. By analyzing these relationships, the research aims to clarify whether economic empowerment genuinely reduces women's tolerance for IPV or whether it is influenced by patriarchal and other socio-economic structures to produce contradictory outcomes.

Overall, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on women's empowerment and IPV by providing empirical insights from a conservative socio-cultural setting. It emphasizes that while economic empowerment is a critical step toward reducing tolerance for IPV, it cannot operate in isolation from cultural transformation, legal enforcement, and awareness of women's rights. The findings are expected to inform policymakers and practitioners seeking to design integrated interventions that not only strengthen women's

economic positions but also challenge the societal norms that sustain tolerance for violence in Pakistan.

Literature Review

This section reviews existing research on women's experiences and attitudes toward intimate partner violence (IPV), focusing on the social, cultural, and economic factors shaping these attitudes. It contextualizes the current study by examining how structural inequalities, patriarchal norms, and individual characteristics influence women's tolerance of IPV, particularly in societies like Pakistan. Key determinants such as economic independence, economic dependence of women, education, religiosity, male dominance, early marriage, and family honor collectively shape women's agency and household power dynamics. These factors reinforce one another through institutionalized gender roles and societal expectations that legitimize male authority and normalize women's subordination, helping explain the persistence of IPV and women's continued justification of tolerating abuse despite its harmful effects.

Economic independence is widely recognized as a crucial determinant in reducing IPV risk and tolerance. Ownership of assets such as housing increases women's bargaining power and can lower the likelihood of physical abuse. However, asset ownership, particularly land, may also provoke emotional violence as men perceive challenges to traditional authority (Ali & Tariq, 2022). Research consistently finds that women's control over income and joint decision-making in financial matters offers stronger protection against IPV than income generation alone (Raj et al., 2018; Stöckl et al., 2021). Nonetheless, empowerment within patriarchal settings often triggers male backlash. Women employed in visible labor markets or formal sectors report higher exposure to emotional and physical abuse, whereas agricultural or home-based work, viewed as socially acceptable, appears somewhat protective (Kibris & Nelson, 2023; Zafar et al., 2022).

Community attitudes play a transformative role: where women's financial roles are normalized, couples report healthier relationships and lower

IPV prevalence (Schuler & Nazneen, 2018; Vyas & Watts, 2009). In contrast, economic dependence and poverty reinforce tolerance of abuse, as financial insecurity compels women to endure violence for survival (Breiding et al., 2017). Even after separation, economic abuse such as financial control and denial of support sustains women's vulnerability (Kaittila et al., 2024; Matjasko et al., 2013). These findings highlight that economic empowerment reduces tolerance for IPV most effectively when combined with equitable household decision-making and supportive social norms.

Education similarly emerges as one of the strongest protective factors against IPV and tolerance. Educated women have greater awareness of rights, stronger communication skills, and broader social networks, enabling them to challenge abuse (Boyle et al., 2009; Mahmood, 2024). In South Asia, higher education is linked to lower justification of IPV, though traditional community norms can limit this effect (Nadeem & Malik, 2019). Media exposure further strengthens education's role by promoting gender equality and legal awareness (Adu, 2023). However, when women's empowerment or income exceeds that of their husbands, it may provoke male insecurity, sometimes increasing IPV risk (Eze-Ajoku et al., 2022; Kibris & Nelson, 2023). Thus, education enhances women's autonomy and rejection of violence, but its protective power depends on broader cultural and gender norm transformations.

Religion occupies a complex and often contradictory position in women's tolerance of IPV. On one hand, religious faith provides coping mechanisms such as patience, forgiveness, and spiritual resilience that help women endure difficult marriages (Perveen & Malik, 2020). On the other hand, patriarchal interpretations of religious teachings frequently legitimize male dominance and discourage women from reporting abuse (Amir et al., 2025; Istratii & Ali, 2023). Studies among African immigrant women, religiosity combined with patriarchal norms, have similarly reinforced IPV-accepting attitudes (Mckinley, 2020). However, when religious teachings are reinterpreted to emphasize equality

and compassion, faith can become a powerful tool for change. Initiatives like Uganda's *Becoming One* program demonstrate how faith-based approaches can reduce IPV through collaboration between religious and secular actors (Boyer et al., 2022). In Muslim and South Asian contexts, engaging religious frameworks to promote justice and mutual respect can help challenge women's tolerance of abuse (Gopalakrishnan & Murugesan, 2023).

Male dominance, early marriage, and family honor are deeply rooted cultural factors that reinforce women's tolerance of IPV. The persistence of male dominance underpins much of IPV and its acceptance. Patriarchal family structures, rigid gender roles, and social approval of male authority sustain unequal power relations. Men experiencing economic stress or lower education often use violence to reassert control, especially when women's financial roles challenge traditional hierarchies (Ali et al., 2011; Babu & Kar, 2010). Although women's employment promotes empowerment, it can also trigger backlash, highlighting the need to engage men in redefining masculinity (Williams et al., 2024). Male dominance further extends through family hierarchies, where mothers-in-law may reinforce control and condone abuse, normalizing IPV across generations (Habiba & Abbas, 2022). In conservative or Muslim-majority societies, strict gender roles can weaken the protective effects of women's employment, as empowerment without social acceptance may increase conflict (Hatun & Fidan, 2024). Therefore, addressing IPV requires gender-transformative approaches that challenge traditional power relations and promote community awareness and legal reform (Khan et al., 2023).

Early marriage and family honor are interrelated cultural factors that reinforce women's tolerance of IPV. Marrying before 18, particularly before 15, increases women's risk of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse due to limited education, low bargaining power, and economic dependency (Kidman, 2016; Nisar et al., 2020). In Pakistan, such marriages often arise from poverty and cultural norms that prioritize family honor over women's autonomy (Nasrullah et al., 2014). This

dependence and social pressure normalize submission and silence in abusive relationships. The notion of family honor further compels women to tolerate IPV to protect family reputation, as their behavior symbolizes collective prestige (Ali et al., 2011; Mahmood, 2024). Honor-based norms and patriarchal expectations, upheld by kinship networks and community elders, often justify male dominance and silence victims (Sattar et al., 2022). These beliefs, internalized by many women, perpetuate IPV acceptance across generations. Addressing these cultural dynamics requires education, economic empowerment, and context-sensitive strategies that promote women's autonomy and challenge honor-based justifications for abuse (Habib et al., 2024).

Collectively, these studies reveal that women's tolerance of IPV is deeply shaped by economic dependency, limited education, patriarchal interpretations of religiosity, and cultural values emphasizing male authority and family honor. Economic and educational empowerment can reduce tolerance only when supported by shifts in community norms and equitable gender relations. Religious and cultural reforms that reinterpret tradition through gender-just lenses, alongside legal protections and male engagement, are essential to transforming IPV-supportive attitudes. Understanding these interlinked determinants provides a foundation for designing holistic, context-sensitive interventions that promote women's agency and challenge the socio-cultural legitimacy of IPV in Pakistan and similar patriarchal societies. This review synthesizes existing empirical evidence, summarizes key thematic findings, and contextualizes the complex interplay of factors influencing women's tolerance of intimate partner violence. By integrating diverse studies, it builds a nuanced understanding necessary for guiding future research and interventions.

Methodology

Estimation Technique

The study utilized the Binary Logistic Regression analysis technique to examine women's tolerance toward Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). The

objective of this analysis was to identify the factors that influence women's likelihood of tolerating IPV. By employing a Binary Logistic Regression model, the study assessed the impact of various independent variables, such as women's economic independence and dependence, education of women, religiosity, male dominance, early marriage, and family honor, on the dependent variable, which represents women's tolerance for IPV. This estimation technique is particularly suitable because the dependent variable is binary in nature, taking the value of 1 if the respondent shows tolerance for IPV and 0 show no tolerance.

Population and Sample Size

The target population for the study comprised women residing in the Peshawar district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. To determine an appropriate and statistically reliable sample size, the study employed Taro Yamane's (1967) formula, which provides an effective method for selecting representative samples from large populations. The formula is expressed as:

$$n = N / (1 + N (e)^2)$$

Where in the formula above;

n is the required sample size from the population under investigation

N is the married female population under investigation

e is the sampling error or precision

$$n = 805,016 / (1 + 805,016 (0.05)^2)$$

So,

$$n = 400$$

Accordingly, a sample size of 400 women was initially determined. However, to enhance representativeness and ensure comprehensive coverage, the final sample included 424 respondents, comprising both working and non-working women.

Sampling Technique

The study used a snowball sampling technique to collect data, allowing access to participants who were difficult to reach through conventional methods. Initial respondents were approached through personal contacts and asked to refer other eligible women within their networks. This

process helped include women from diverse socio-economic, educational, and cultural backgrounds, making the data more representative. A structured questionnaire survey was conducted among working and non-working women in Peshawar, selected for its cultural and socio-economic diversity. This approach enabled the study to compare tolerance toward Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) across varying degrees of economic dependence or independence, while also considering the influence of education, culture, and religion.

Econometric Model Specification

To achieve the study's objectives, a Binary Logistic Regression Model was employed. This model is suitable when the dependent variable has two outcomes, as it predicts the probability of women's tolerance for Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). The model is specified as follows:

$$TIPV = \beta_0 + \beta_1(EI) + \beta_2(ED) + \beta_3(EDU) + \beta_4(RL) + \beta_5(MD) + \beta_6(EM) + \beta_7(HRF) + \beta_8(CV) + \epsilon$$

Where:

TIPV = Tolerance for Intimate Partner Violence

EI = Economic Independence of women

ED = Economic Dependence of women

EDU = Education of women

RL = Religiosity

MD = Male Dominance

EM = Early Marriage

HRF = Honor and Respect of Family

CV = Control Variables, which include age, location, marital status, education level, employment status, family income, number of children, family structure, expense supporter, personal income, income source, job type, and monthly income

ϵ = Error term

The model examines how these independent variables influence women's likelihood of tolerating IPV. The binary logistic regression approach helps identify the probability of IPV tolerance based on women's economic status, education, religiosity, and socio-cultural factors. This model enables a deeper understanding of how these determinants collectively shape

women's attitudes toward IPV within the socio-cultural context of Peshawar.

Theoretical Framework

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) remains a major issue with profound implications for women's well-being, family dynamics, and societal development. Understanding the factors that shape women's tolerance toward IPV is crucial, particularly in patriarchal societies. This study examines how economic dependence or independence, education, and socio-cultural and religious norms influence women's acceptance of IPV. The theoretical framework integrates the Theory of Spousal Violence through a non-cooperative bargaining model and Male Backlash Theory to explain the mechanisms behind women's tolerance of abuse. Building upon existing theories and research, this study aims to deepen our understanding of the pivotal role these factors play in shaping a woman's tolerance towards IPV, whether she is economically dependent or independent.

Theoretical Foundations: Non-Cooperative Bargaining and Male Backlash Perspectives

Women's economic independence plays a crucial role in shaping their power and decision-making within relationships. According to the non-cooperative bargaining model, women who earn their own income or control resources gain greater ability to resist or leave abusive partners, reducing their tolerance for IPV (Farmer & Tiefenthaler, 1996; Tauchen et al., 1991). However, male backlash theory suggests that some men may feel threatened when women become financially independent, using violence to reassert control and maintain dominance (Paul, 2016). These theories indicate that while economic independence can empower women, it may also provoke negative responses from partners, particularly in societies where men are viewed as primary providers. Moreover, cultural norms, traditional gender roles, and family honor often compel women to tolerate abuse despite having the means to leave. This underscores that economic independence alone is insufficient to reduce IPV tolerance; socio-cultural and

patriarchal factors continue to shape women's decisions and constrain their autonomy.

Dependent Variable

Tolerance for Intimate Partner Violence (IPV):

Tolerance for IPV refers to the degree to which women accept or endure abusive behavior from their spouses, regardless of the severity or frequency of violence. It encompasses attitudes, perceptions, and behavioral responses that normalize or justify domestic abuse within personal and societal contexts. This variable captures women's willingness to remain in abusive relationships, often influenced by economic dependence, cultural norms, religious beliefs, and social pressures (Amir-ud-Din et al., 2021; Khalid & Choudhry, 2021; Uthman et al., 2009). Research indicates that financially independent women generally exhibit lower tolerance for physical abuse compared to those who rely on their spouses for financial support (Basu & Famoye, 2004). However, social and cultural constraints, including family expectations, patriarchal norms, and societal stigmas, may compel even independent women to tolerate abuse (Tariq, 2013). Other influencing factors include educational attainment, age at marriage, place of residence, and childhood experiences, which collectively shape women's perceptions and responses toward IPV (Gillum, 2019; Jan et al., 2021). Tolerance for IPV is therefore a multifaceted construct, shaped by the interplay of economic, social, cultural, and personal determinants within diverse societal contexts.

Independent Variables

Economic Independence of women refers to a woman's ability to earn her own income and manage personal financial resources, which significantly influences her tolerance toward Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). Studies suggest that while financially independent women may face occasional backlash from partners, having their own earnings generally reduces their tolerance for domestic abuse (Farmer & Tiefenthaler, 1996; Paul, 2016). Women who earn less than their spouses often exhibit a higher tolerance for IPV than those earning as much or

more (Eze-Ajoku et al., 2022). Accordingly, it is hypothesized that economically independent women are less likely to tolerate IPV.

Economic Dependence of women refers to a woman's reliance on her spouse for financial support, which significantly shapes her tolerance for Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). Studies indicate that women dependent on their husbands are more likely to endure spousal abuse, resulting in a positive association between economic dependence and IPV tolerance (Basu & Famoye, 2004; Dhungel et al., 2017). Conversely, women with independent income sources, higher education, or wealth apart from their husbands often resist abuse and show lower tolerance for IPV (Amir-ud-Din et al., 2021). This study examines how economic dependence on the spouse affects women's tolerance of violence, hypothesizing that women who are economically dependent on their spouse exhibit higher tolerance for IPV.

Education of women is a crucial factor influencing their ability to resist and reduce tolerance for Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). Education enhances a woman's socio-economic status, decision-making capacity, and awareness of her rights, empowering her to challenge abusive relationships (Douki et al., 2007; Rani & Bonu, 2009). While economic independence alone may sometimes increase IPV risk in low-paying jobs, substantial educational attainment combined with financial empowerment reduces tolerance for abuse (Eze-Ajoku et al., 2022). Even financially dependent women with education are more likely to resist IPV. Accordingly, the study hypothesizes that higher levels of education are associated with lower tolerance for IPV (Amir-ud-Din et al., 2021; Khalid & Choudhry, 2021; Naqvi et al., 2011).

Religiosity plays a significant role in shaping women's tolerance toward Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), regardless of their economic status. Its influence is complex, acting as both a protective factor and a potential risk. Women with strong religious knowledge, especially when combined with education, are often more aware of their rights and less likely to tolerate abuse,

reflecting lower acceptance of IPV (Diallo & Voia, 2016; Warren, 2015; Yang, 2021). Conversely, in some societies, religious teachings emphasizing obedience, patience, and forgiveness when interpreted through patriarchal norms can increase women's tolerance for IPV, particularly among those with limited education (Douki et al., 2003). This study therefore hypothesizes that women with higher levels of religiosity exhibit higher tolerance for IPV.

Cultural Factors

Cultural factors significantly shape a woman's tolerance toward IPV, often compelling women to tolerate abuse regardless of economic independence, as societal norms and values reinforce tolerance of spousal violence (Amir-ud-Din et al., 2021; Naqvi et al., 2011). Some of the arguably salient factors in this regard are discussed below.

Male Dominance significantly influences women's tolerance toward Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), especially in patriarchal societies. Women's economic independence can challenge traditional gender roles, sometimes provoking violence from male partners through physical abuse or financial control (Eze-Ajoku et al., 2022; Paul, 2016). Cultural norms and societal expectations often lead women to justify or tolerate abuse, regardless of their economic status, reinforcing gender inequality (Jan et al., 2021). This study therefore, hypothesizes that higher male dominance increases women's tolerance for IPV.

Early Marriage significantly affects women's tolerance toward Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). In many societies, particularly rural areas, early marriage increases girls' vulnerability to abuse by limiting their educational opportunities and hindering economic and social empowerment (Begum et al., 2015; Jan et al., 2021). Early marriage often fosters dependence on male partners, reducing women's ability to assert independence and increasing their tolerance for IPV. This study hypothesizes that early marriage increases women's tolerance for IPV.

Honor and Respect of Family play a crucial role in shaping women's tolerance toward Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). In honor-based societies, preserving family reputation often takes precedence, and violence against women is downplayed as a private matter (Douki et al., 2003, 2007). Cultural norms, traditional gender expectations, and fear of social stigma compel women to tolerate abuse, even if they are educated or economically empowered (Ceylan-Batur et al., 2023; Uthman et al., 2009). This study hypothesizes that women who prioritize family honor and respect exhibit higher tolerance for IPV.

Results

This section presents the findings of our study and explains their meaning and significance in relation to the research objectives. This is arranged in a logical order so that the results are clearly presented first, followed by a discussion that highlights their significance within the broader context.

Descriptive Statistics

The data collected from the respondents provides important insights into their demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. These descriptive statistics outline key variables that together help in understanding the background of the study population, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Freq	Percent	Obs	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Dev.
Age			424	2.58	2	2	1.11
15-24 years	53	12.50%					
25-34 years	191	45.05%					
35-44 years	98	23.11%					
45-54 years	46	10.85%					
55 & above	36	8.49%					
Location			424	1.28	1	1	0.45
Urban	307	72.41%					
Rural	117	27.59%					
Marital Status			424	0.94	1	1	0.41
Single/Unmarried	49	11.56%					
Currently Married	350	82.55%					
Divorced/Separated	25	5.90%					
Education			424	3.29	4	4	1.29
No education	36	8.49%					
Incomplete Primary	23	5.42%					
Complete Primary	21	4.95%					
Secondary	48	11.32%					
Higher	296	69.81%					
Employment			424	1.37	1	1	0.48
Unemployed	269	63.44%					
Employed	155	36.56%					
Family Type			424	1.57	2	2	0.49
Nuclear Family	179	42.22%					
Joint Family	245	57.78%					
Children			424	1.83	2	0	1.51
0	124	29.25%					

1	65	15.33%					
2	78	18.40%					
3	72	16.98%					
4 or more	85	20.05%					
Family Income			424	4.25	5	5	1.22
Rs.10,000–20,000	24	5.66%					
Rs.21,000–30,000	32	7.55%					
Rs.31,000–40,000	33	7.78%					
Rs.41,000–50,000	60	14.15%					
Above Rs.50,000	275	64.86%					
Personal Income			424	0.47	0	0	0.50
No	225	53.07%					
Yes	199	46.93%					
Income Source			424	3.44	4	5	1.76
Job	121	28.54%					
Business	33	7.78%					
Inheritance/Property	17	4.01%					
Other	46	10.85%					
Not applicable	207	48.82%					
Expense Supporter			424	2.33	1	1	1.98
Husband	259	61.08%					
Father	44	10.38%					
Brother	11	2.59%					
Son	18	4.25%					
Other	16	3.77%					
Not applicable	76	17.92%					
Job Type			424	3.18	4	4	0.99
Manual/Domestic	19	4.48%					
Office/Professional	120	28.30%					
Other	49	11.56%					
Not applicable	236	55.66%					
Own Monthly Income			424	5.00	5	6	1.42
Rs.10k–20k	24	5.66%					
Rs.21k–30k	19	4.48%					
Rs.31k–40k	15	3.54%					
Rs.41k–50k	30	7.08%					
Above Rs.50k	125	29.48%					
Not applicable	211	49.76%					

N=424

Source: Author's computation

The study surveyed 424 women from the Peshawar district of KP, primarily young and middle-aged, with the largest group aged 25–34 years (45.05%). Most respondents live in urban areas (72.41%) and are currently married (82.55%). Education

levels are relatively high, with around 70% holding higher education degrees. Employment is lower, with 63.44% unemployed, and most women live in joint family systems (57.78%). Family size varies, with nearly one-third having no children, while

others have between one and four or more. Household income is predominantly above Rs. 50,000 per month (64.86%), though almost half of the women do not earn personal income.

Among women with personal earnings, most rely on jobs (28.54%), with smaller proportions engaged in business, inheritance, or other sources. The majority of respondents depend on husbands for household expenses (61.08%), though some are financially independent. Job types among the employed are mainly professional or office-based, while over half are not employed. Regarding personal monthly income, nearly half of the women reported "not applicable" (49.76%), while 29.48% earned above Rs. 50,000, and smaller proportions fell into lower income categories. Standard deviation values indicate moderate to high variation in age, education, family size, personal income, and employment status,

reflecting a diverse sample. Overall, the data represents primarily young, urban, married, and well-educated women, with varying economic independence and family structures, providing a comprehensive view of socio-economic and cultural dynamics relevant to the study.

Binary Logistic Regression Analysis

To test the hypotheses, the study employs a logistic regression model with women's tolerance for intimate partner violence (IPV) as the dependent variable. The model incorporates seven independent variables representing the core hypotheses. The findings, presented in Table 2 below, report odds ratios (OR) with 95% confidence intervals (CI) and significance levels, highlighting the relative influence of each factor on women's likelihood of tolerating IPV.

Table 2: Determination of Tolerance for IPV
Dependent Variable (Tolerance for Intimate Partner Violence)

Variables	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	p-value
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES		
Economic independence	1.525 (1.029 – 2.260)**	0.035
Economic dependence	2.957 (1.772 – 4.934)***	0.000
Education of women	1.014 (0.623 – 1.649)	0.956
Religiosity	0.943 (0.630 – 1.412)	0.775
Male dominance	1.187 (0.787 – 1.789)	0.413
Early marriage	0.582 (0.340 – 0.997)**	0.049
Honor and respect of family	0.828 (0.505 – 1.358)	0.455
SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CONTROLS		
Age	1.087 (0.800 – 1.477)	0.593
Location	1.225 (0.697 – 2.153)	0.481
Marital status	0.922 (0.485 – 1.751)	0.804
Education level	1.074 (0.841 – 1.370)	0.568
Employment	1.441 (0.656 – 3.162)	0.363
Family type	0.866 (0.529 – 1.419)	0.568
No. of children	0.893 (0.712 – 1.121)	0.329
Family income	0.837 (0.630 – 1.110)	0.217
Personal income	0.732 (0.227 – 2.366)	0.603
Income source	0.532 (0.382 – 0.742)***	0.000
Expense Supporter	0.935 (0.811 – 1.077)	0.352
Job type	2.883 (1.694 – 4.907)***	0.000
Own Monthly Income	1.186 (0.913 – 1.541)	0.200
Constant	0.623 (0.030 – 12.756)	0.759

Note: Odds ratios reported; 95% CI in parentheses.
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Source: Author's computation

Dependent Variable

Tolerance for Intimate Partner Violence (TIPV)

The dependent variable of this study measures women's tolerance for Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) within spousal relationships. It was assessed through a single survey question asking whether economically independent women are less likely to tolerate abuse compared to economically dependent women. Results reveal that 74.06% of respondents indicated tolerance toward IPV, while 25.94% expressed non-tolerance for IPV. This indicates that most women in the sample showed tolerance for IPV within their relationship. This reflects the deep-rooted influence of cultural and societal norms that normalize spousal violence.

The variable was coded as binary (1 = tolerance, 0 = non-tolerance). Overall, the findings highlight the predominance of tolerant attitudes toward IPV among women, setting the groundwork for regression analysis to explore how economic, cultural, and demographic factors shape these attitudes.

Independent Variables

Economic Independence of Women

Economic independence, representing women's ability to earn, manage finances, and make independent decisions, was measured using five survey items. The first asked whether respondents could currently support themselves financially. Most agreed (31.84%) or strongly agreed (20.75%), while 27.59% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The second item focused on future self-support, 39.15% agreed and 28.54% strongly agreed. The third item asked whether women should have full control over their own earnings, with 41.27% agreeing and 32.31% strongly agreeing. The fourth item asked whether women should have personal savings or investments. This received the strongest endorsement, with 57.78% strongly agreeing and 37.03% agreeing. Lastly, 40.80% agreed and 37.50% strongly agreed that

women should be able to travel alone to purchase essentials.

These five items were combined and standardized into an index of economic independence, showing good reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.739$). The logistic regression results reveal that economic independence increases the likelihood of IPV tolerance by 1.5 times (Odds Ratio = 1.525). This indicates that women with greater financial autonomy are somewhat more likely to tolerate IPV, reflecting the complex socio-cultural context where empowerment does not necessarily translate into lower acceptance of violence. Social pressures, traditional expectations, and family norms may influence even economically independent women to continue tolerating abuse within marriage.

Economic Dependence of Women

Economic dependence, reflecting women's financial reliance on their husbands and limited decision-making autonomy, was measured using five survey items. The first asked whether a woman must depend on her husband for household expenses; 30.90% agreed and 11.56% strongly agreed, while 27.36% disagreed. The second item assessed whether family income is sufficient without the woman's contribution, with 42.22% agreeing and 15.33% strongly agreeing. The third item explored whether dependence reduces women's decision-making power, almost 0.09% agreed and 15.80% strongly agreed. The fourth item examined permission-seeking behavior, where 45.52% agreed and 15.09% strongly agreed that dependent women should ask their husbands before spending money. Finally, 40.09% agreed and 13.92% strongly agreed that economic dependence lowers confidence and limits personal growth.

These five items were combined and standardized into an index of economic dependence (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.413$). The logistic regression results show that economic dependence increases the likelihood of IPV tolerance by nearly three

times (Odds Ratio = 2.957). This finding indicates that financially dependent women are substantially more likely to tolerate IPV, underscoring how economic vulnerability and restricted autonomy reinforce acceptance of violence within marriage.

Education of Women

Education, a key factor shaping women's autonomy and awareness, was measured using five items reflecting perceptions of equality and opportunity. Most respondents supported equal educational rights for women nearly 54.25% strongly agreed, and 33.49% agreed with the question. Similarly, 47.41% agreed that women lack equal opportunities in education. Opinions were more divided on prioritizing marriage over education, with 30.66% disagreeing and 38.44% agreeing, showing the persistence of traditional views. Moreover, 45.75% agreed that the absence of separate institutes limits women's education, and 47.17% agreed that parents still prefer educating sons over daughters.

These items were standardized into an index of women's education (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.457$). Logistic regression results show that education has no significant relationship with IPV tolerance (Odds Ratio = 1.014), suggesting that higher education levels do not necessarily reduce tolerance for IPV. This result indicates that education alone may not challenge deep-rooted patriarchal values. While it increases awareness, cultural and family pressures can still lead even educated women to tolerate violence to preserve marital harmony or social reputation.

Religiosity

Religiosity, an important cultural factor influencing women's values and decision-making, was measured through five survey items assessing personal faith, participation, and religious guidance in life. Most women (58.49%) considered themselves religious, and 23.11% very religious. Around one-third (32.08%) attended religious gatherings sometimes, while 35.62% attended rarely. Nearly half (48.11%) agreed and 22.41% strongly agreed that life experiences strengthened their faith. Over half (49.53%)

agreed they base their actions on religion, and almost 89% believed their religious beliefs provide true meaning to life. These items were combined into a standardized religiosity index with acceptable reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.688$). Regression analysis showed no significant relationship between religiosity and IPV tolerance (Odds Ratio = 0.943), indicating that more religious women are only slightly less likely to tolerate IPV. This suggests that while religiosity remains central to women's identities, it does not directly influence attitudes toward IPV. The result may reflect that religious teachings are interpreted differently, some reinforcing traditional gender norms, others encouraging moral strength, resulting in no clear directional effect.

Male Dominance

Male dominance, reflecting patriarchal beliefs and practices favoring men in decision-making, was measured using five survey items. The first item asked whether sons should be more encouraged than daughters to pursue higher education. Most respondents rejected this idea, with 27.59% strongly disagreeing and 35.38% disagreeing. The second item stated that some jobs should give preference to men; 43.87% agreed and 11.08% strongly agreed, showing broad support for male employment priority. The third item examined decision-making about children, where 31.84% agreed and 20.28% strongly agreed that fathers should have greater authority. The fourth item explored freedom differences between genders, with 31.37% agreeing and 10.14% strongly agreeing that women should have less freedom than men. Lastly, the fifth item stated that a man's role is to provide while a woman's is to care for the home. Around 36.08% agreed and 15.80% strongly agreed, indicating continued endorsement of traditional gender roles.

These items were combined into a standardized index of male dominance, showing good internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.717$). Regression results indicate that male dominance slightly increases the likelihood of IPV tolerance, as women endorsing such views are 1.18 times more likely to tolerate IPV (Odds Ratio = 1.187). However, this relationship is not statistically

significant, suggesting that while patriarchal attitudes remain widespread, their direct effect on IPV tolerance may be shaped by broader social and economic contexts that reinforce or challenge these norms.

Early Marriage

Early marriage, reflecting cultural norms around marital consent, empowerment, and protection, was measured using five survey items. The first item asked whether parents should be the sole decision-makers in a girl's marriage; nearly half disagreed, with 18.87% strongly disagreeing and 26.65% disagreeing. The second item stated that a girl's consent is as important as a man's; the majority strongly agreed (60.38%) or agreed (30.90%). The third item suggested that girls are often forced to leave education for marriage, with 51.42% agreeing and 12.97% strongly agreeing. The fourth item emphasized empowering girls in marriage decisions; most respondents supported this view, with 45.28% strongly agreeing and 41.51% agreeing. The fifth item stated that marriage offers protection to women regardless of age; around 44.58% agreed and 17.69% strongly agreed.

These items were combined into a standardized index of early marriage (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.285$). Regression results reveal that early marriage significantly reduces tolerance for IPV, as women endorsing early marriage are 0.58 times less likely to tolerate IPV (Odds Ratio = 0.582, $p = 0.049$). This inverse relationship suggests that while early marriage may restrict education and autonomy, it can also provide familial oversight and support, making women less tolerant of IPV. In this context, early marriage appears to play a complex, dual role, simultaneously limiting independence yet fostering conditions that lower tolerance toward abuse.

Honor and Respect of Family

Honor and respect of family, reflecting cultural values of preserving reputation and dignity, was measured using four survey items. The first item asked whether women should endure marital hardship to protect family honor; nearly half disagreed, with 28.77% disagreeing and 18.87%

strongly disagreeing. The second item stated that taking legal action against a violent husband brings dishonor to the family; a majority agreed (45.52% agreed, 15.57% strongly agreed). The third item asked if women should cut off friendships to protect family honor; most endorsed this view, with 46.93% agreeing and 33.96% strongly agreeing. The fourth item asked whether women would forgive those who damaged family reputation; 37.03% strongly disagreed and 38.44% disagreed, showing strong disapproval of forgiveness in such cases. These items were standardized into an index of family honor and respect, showing low internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.147$). Regression results indicate that women emphasizing family honor are 0.82 times less likely to tolerate IPV (Odds Ratio = 0.828), but the relationship is not statistically significant. This suggests that while family honor strongly shapes social behavior, it does not directly predict tolerance toward IPV, implying that its influence operates more as a cultural backdrop than as a determinant of women's acceptance of violence.

Constant in Logistic Regression

In the binary logistic regression model, the constant (intercept) represents the baseline odds of women's tolerance for IPV when all predictors are held at their reference categories (e.g., rural residence, unemployed, lower education). In this study, the constant had an odds ratio of 0.623, indicating that, at baseline, women are less likely to tolerate IPV. However, the result is not statistically significant, showing high uncertainty. Although not the focus of interpretation, the constant is essential for correctly estimating probabilities and ensuring that the effects of all independent variables are properly adjusted.

Demographics

The binary logistic regression results show that among socio-demographic factors, income source and job type are significant predictors of women's tolerance of IPV. Women with an income source are 46.8 percent less likely to tolerate IPV, indicating that financial independence reduces acceptance of violence. In contrast, women

working in certain job types are 2.88 times more likely to tolerate IPV, suggesting that the nature of employment influences attitudes toward violence. Other factors, though not statistically significant, still show important trends. Older, more educated, employed, and urban women tend to show slightly higher tolerance, while married women, those in joint families, or with stronger financial support are less likely to tolerate IPV. Overall, the results highlight that women's economic independence and job nature are the most influential factors shaping IPV tolerance, while other demographic characteristics reflect broader social and cultural dynamics that warrant further study.

Diagnostic Checks

Several diagnostic tests were conducted to ensure the reliability and validity of the logistic regression model. The Wald test confirmed that economic dependence, economic independence, and early marriage significantly influence women's tolerance of IPV, while other predictors showed no significant effect.

The Likelihood Ratio Chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 58.09$, $p < 0.001$) indicated a good overall model fit, and the Hosmer-Lemeshow test ($\chi^2 = 5.88$, $p = 0.66$) showed no evidence of poor fit, confirming that predicted and observed outcomes align well. The mean VIF value of 1.229 suggested no multicollinearity among predictors, ensuring stable estimates.

Finally, the ROC curve showed an AUC of 0.7275, demonstrating acceptable predictive accuracy, meaning the model correctly distinguishes between women who tolerate IPV and those who do not about 73% of the time. Overall, these diagnostics confirm that the model is well-specified, statistically sound, and reliable for interpretation.

Conclusion

This study explored the determinants of women's tolerance of intimate partner violence (IPV) in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with a focus on economic independence, economic dependence, and key socio-cultural factors. Using a binary logistic regression grounded in non-cooperative bargaining and male backlash theories, data from

424 married women revealed that economic dependence significantly increases tolerance of IPV, while economic independence, contrary to expectation, also shows a positive association. Early marriage emerged as a significant factor reducing IPV tolerance, whereas education, religiosity, male dominance, and family honor showed no statistically significant effects. These results highlight that women's economic position is the most powerful determinant of IPV tolerance, while socio-cultural factors, though conceptually important, play a weaker role in this context.

The first major finding concerns economic independence, which was expected to reduce tolerance for IPV but instead showed a positive association. This outcome suggests that economic independence, though often linked with empowerment, can have paradoxical effects in patriarchal societies. When women begin to control financial resources, it may challenge traditional gender roles, provoking conflict or reinforcing power struggles within households. As noted by Ali & Tariq (2022) and Vyas & Watts (2009), economic resources can both empower women and create tension within relationships, depending on the social context. Empowerment that occurs in isolation, without corresponding social acceptance, may not translate into reduced IPV. Studies such as Raj et al. (2018) emphasize that collective empowerment, through joint financial decision-making and social support, is more effective in diminishing tolerance of violence. Thus, economic independence alone is insufficient; empowerment must be accompanied by shifts in attitudes and social norms to ensure that financial autonomy enhances rather than complicates women's agency.

The second key result concerns economic dependence, which strongly increases tolerance of IPV. Women reliant on their husbands for financial support are far more likely to endure abuse, reflecting the structural power imbalance embedded in economic dependency. This finding is consistent with evidence that limited access to independent income or assets constrains women's ability to resist or leave abusive relationships (Basu & Famoye, 2004; Vyas & Watts, 2009). In

Pakistan and similar contexts, women who lack financial security face heightened vulnerability, as dependence reduces their bargaining power and restricts their options for safety or separation. Conversely, women with even minimal financial autonomy often demonstrate greater confidence and capacity to challenge abuse. This underscores the need for policies that strengthen women's access to stable income and assets, through skills training, microfinance, or employment opportunities, so that economic empowerment translates into tangible reductions in IPV tolerance.

A third important finding is the significant relationship between early marriage and lower IPV tolerance. Women married at a younger age were less likely to justify or tolerate IPV. This result contrasts with global trends, where early marriage is typically associated with higher IPV exposure due to limited education and autonomy (Begum et al., 2015; Kidman, 2016). In the Peshawar context, however, early marriage may coincide with protective family structures, including stronger parental oversight and community support, which reduce women's tolerance of abuse. Many respondents in this study were educated, suggesting that awareness of rights, combined with family involvement, provides protective effects. These findings indicate that early marriage's impact is context-dependent, potentially protective in cohesive social settings but harmful in isolated or disempowering ones. As Rani & Bonu (2009) note, the outcomes of early marriage vary widely, shaped by cultural and familial dynamics rather than age alone.

Beyond the main predictors, the analysis of socio-demographic variables reveals that the source and nature of income are the strongest influences on IPV tolerance. Women with an independent income are less likely to tolerate violence, confirming the protective role of financial autonomy. However, certain job types may increase tolerance, suggesting that workplace environment and employment stability matter as much as having a job itself. Non-significant but suggestive trends show that higher age, education, employment, and urban residence slightly increase tolerance, while being married, living in joint

families, and having more children tend to reduce it. These subtle patterns reflect how individual and household characteristics interact with broader social and cultural contexts to shape women's responses to IPV.

Among the cultural variables, education, religiosity, male dominance, and family honor did not emerge as statistically significant predictors, yet they provide valuable insight. Education, while generally empowering, did not reduce IPV tolerance in this study, perhaps because social norms and partner attitudes continue to limit its protective power (Boyle et al., 2009; Nadeem & Malik, 2019). Religiosity also showed no significant effect, suggesting its dual role. While faith can offer moral strength (Diallo & Voia, 2016), rigid patriarchal interpretations may perpetuate tolerance for abuse (Mckinley, 2020). Similarly, male dominance and family honor, though central to patriarchal control, did not significantly predict IPV tolerance, indicating that economic realities and modernizing influences may be reshaping traditional hierarchies. Women who valued family honor were slightly less likely to tolerate IPV, hinting that reputational concerns can indirectly motivate resistance to violence (Ali et al., 2011).

Overall, the study underscores that women's tolerance of IPV results from a complex interplay of economic and socio-cultural factors. Economic dependence most strongly increases tolerance, while even economic independence may reinforce it under patriarchal constraints. Early marriage, conversely, reduces tolerance, revealing that cultural practices cannot be universally categorized without accounting for local contexts. Education and religiosity, though central to empowerment discourse, appear insufficient to shift deeply rooted norms without broader structural and social reform.

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that economic empowerment alone cannot eliminate IPV tolerance. Meaningful change requires integrated approaches that couple financial autonomy with social transformation initiatives that promote gender-equitable norms, involve men in dialogue, and foster collective empowerment. True empowerment extends

beyond income, encompassing agency, choice, and the capacity to challenge structural subordination. Thus, addressing IPV in Pakistan and similar contexts demands both economic and cultural reform to ensure that women's empowerment translates into lasting safety, dignity, and freedom from violence.

Recommendations

Future research should further explore the determinants of women's tolerance of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) within Pakistan's diverse cultural and economic settings. Comparative studies across regions can clarify whether the dynamics observed in Peshawar hold elsewhere or vary with local religious and socio-economic contexts, strengthening both theoretical and policy insights.

The findings reveal that economic empowerment alone cannot eliminate IPV tolerance. While independence is often viewed as protective, it may also reinforce tolerance when women remain bound by patriarchal norms. Future studies should therefore examine not only income generation but also women's control over resources and decision-making power to identify when empowerment reduces, or inadvertently sustains, IPV tolerance.

Policy efforts must combine economic empowerment with social transformation. Financial initiatives should be paired with programs that challenge gender norms, enhance legal protections, and expand rights awareness. Approaches involving community engagement and male participation are vital to ensure that economic autonomy translates into genuine agency and safety. Beyond Pakistan, these insights stress that IPV dynamics are context-dependent. For instance, the finding that early marriage reduced IPV tolerance under specific conditions challenges universal assumptions and underscores the need for culturally grounded interventions.

In essence, advancing a nuanced, context-sensitive research and policy agenda that integrates economic and socio-cultural dimensions is essential. Only through aligning financial independence with cultural change can empowerment lead to lasting dignity, protection, and freedom from violence.

Declaration: This work is derived from Aiman Akbar's M.Phil. thesis, supervised by Dr. Fahim Nawaz at the Department of Economics, University of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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