



Economic violence and its associated factors on Filipina women: Evidence from the 2013 and 2017 Philippines National Demographic and Health Survey

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Abstract

Economic violence is referred to as any act that controls a victim's ability to acquire, use, and gain resources, which threatens the victim's economic security. This type of violence against women has largely been neglected in most literature, despite intimate partner violence being one of the more pervasive social problems globally. Most empirical studies focus on physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, or a combination of these, necessitating the study of economic violence, particularly in low- and middle-income nations such as the Philippines. High-income countries showed a lower lifetime prevalence of economic violence given that these countries have better-developed protective laws, and economic ability and rights for women. Although other studies like Antai et al. (2014), Yount et al. (2016), Adams et al. (2015), and Asencios-Gonzales (2018) looked into the association between economic violence and other demographic and socioeconomic characteristics in a year and did not consider husband/partner's alcohol consumption, we examine numerous factors that are associated with the occurrence of economic violence to women in the Philippines between two time periods. In the National Demographic and Health Surveys, the binary logistic regression model was applied to pooled cross-sectional weighted data from women aged 15 to 49 years old in the Philippines, in 2013 and 2017. The analysis of this study only includes weighted observations of women who are currently in a union. Results showed that economic violence is strongly associated with other forms of violence—physical, emotional, and sexual violence. Measures of socioeconomic inequalities and other explanatory variables have shown that having more children, lower educational attainment, and having a husband who drinks alcohol were significantly associated with increasing the odds of experiencing economic violence. This suggests that there is a need to address the factors that contribute to economic violence to put a stop to the prevalence of economic abuse against women in the Philippines.

Policy Recommendations

1. Government programs can focus not only on enhancing an education system but also strengthening work opportunities for women, especially the under served. The results show that uneducated and unemployed women are particularly vulnerable to economic violence. This provides an insight that improving access to educational and economic opportunities for Filipino women is instrumental in reducing, if not eradicating, their experience of economic violence with their partners. The government should institutionalize more programs that cater to women's recovery from domestic violence, such as assistance in education, enhancement of current skills, and increase in job opportunities. Furthermore, this can be strengthened in rural areas where there is a higher likelihood of its existence compared to those in urban areas. Women in rural areas in the Philippines may benefit immensely from information related to their own economic rights, wherein community-based programs can play an important role in encouraging the education of gender equality and rights among women and men.
2. Enhance the implementation of the Reproductive Health Law and other nationwide health programs. Results showed that the increase in the number of living children significantly affects the likelihood of the occurrence of economic violence. Thus, government agencies focused on social welfare should also take the initiative to improve programs across the country. In the Philippines, the Reproductive Health Law has been in implementation seeking universal and free access to modern contraceptives and family planning programs, especially in impoverished communities (Cuaton, 2019). However, national-level implementation missed intersectoral collaboration and concentrated on biomedical solutions that inadequately improve reproductive health outcomes. Policies must shift away from a health-centric scheme grounded on family planning policy and expand on other life-course interventions. With the strong implementation of such amendments, households are more likely to control the household population and have manageable financial burdens, and less likely to experience economic violence.
3. Expand the protection of women against economic violence, which is given less attention despite the gravity of its circumstances. Currently, Republic Act 9262, or the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004, holds the protection of Filipino women from their abusers when it comes

to physical, sexual, and emotional violence, and economic abuse. However, the implementation of this policy has not only been inadequate, as abusers are not guaranteed punishment, but also has focused mostly on the known first three types of violence. In Australia, where a 12-year national plan was built to ensure that communities are free of violence, services are easily accessible to women facing violence, the justice system's response is more effective, and perpetrators are held accountable for their actions (Avila & Ferreira, 2021). Overall, this policy contributed to promoting a national campaign to prevent violence against women. The difference is that in Australia, their experience demonstrated that designing a policy is not enough. It is crucial to identify the roots and types of domestic violence through research, develop indicators of the policy's effectiveness, and improve the policy according to context. This shows that creating a solution for domestic violence still has a long way to go in the Philippines. It depicts the difference in perception of violence on top of how economic violence is often overlooked and less considered to be serious. Hence, improving the implementation and scope of protection of Filipino women through a comprehensive anti-domestic violence policy is necessary, and economic violence should be given more emphasis.

Introduction

Economic violence refers to controlling one's ability to gain, use, and sustain resources, which threatens one's economic security and potential for self-sufficiency (Stylianou, 2018). Economic violence against women can be depicted by male partners, who have absolute control over resources (not necessarily financial), hide these resources, or refuse to financially support their female partners, which leads women to be completely dependent on their male partners for basic needs and satisfaction (Werwie et al., 2019). Economic violence is often considered within the scope of emotional or psychological violence. But recently, scholars have begun to define economic violence as a unique form of violence (Stylianou, 2018). The discussion and study for this may not be as prominent, but it is equally as detrimental; hence it is highly necessitated.

As the Philippines is moving forward to reach its sustainable development goals, the country must push for policies and programs that safeguard the protection of women to achieve SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth. Given these, this study aims to identify the various factors that are associated with economic violence, its relationship with other forms of domestic violence, and its implications on current policies and programs for economically abused Filipino women.

Model Specification and Results

This study uses a logistic regression model to determine the factors affecting economic violence against women. Moreover, it utilizes the individual women's record (IR) file of the 2013 and 2017 National Demographic and Health Survey. The sample consisted of 7,583 unweighted observations for the year 2013, whereas 12,510 unweighted observations for the year 2017 after the interviewed women who were formerly in union and other observations consisting of missing information were eliminated. Additionally, weighted observations of women were used to improve the accuracy of the results. The data sets included women's individual sample weights to match the sample design of the study. Thus, weight analysis was performed. With this data, the study utilized a three-step analysis, consisting of the Univariate, Bivariate, and Multivariate analysis. The Univariate analysis is used to cover descriptive statistics for an initial investigation. It also provides an unadjusted view of the relevance of each variable in the study. Next, the Bivariate analysis determines the strength of the relationship between the dependent variable (economic violence) and various explanatory variables. It also identifies potential covariates to be tested in a multivariable model. Lastly, multivariate analysis is used to determine the factors affecting economic violence against women. This allowed the researchers to estimate a phenomenon where the dependent variable is binary, but with multiple predictor variables that best predict the value of the dependent variable quantitatively. This estimation strategy allowed the use of odds ratios for each of the independent variables in the model (Alexopoulos, 2010). Findings from the univariate analysis showed that there was a modest increase in the number of Filipina women experiencing economic violence from 2013 to 2017. The average age of the women respondents was 34 years old while for the husband it was 37 years old in both 2013 and 2017. The number of living children was 2.71 and 2.53 for 2013 and 2017, respectively. For the place of residence, it was found that there has been an increase in respondents residing in rural areas, as opposed to urban areas. For religion, most of the respondents were Roman Catholic. It was also found that there was a decrease in the number of husbands who drink alcohol. Concerning household income, non-poor households exhibited higher instances of economic violence. Furthermore, most of the observations showed that women had completed or were in higher education, while most of the husbands or partners were found to be on their way or had completed higher education. Lastly, there was a decrease in the occurrence of other types of violence, namely, physical, emotional, and sexual from 2013 to 2017.

The results of the bivariate analysis showed that a year's increase in the age of women and husbands will likely decrease the odds of economic violence. Women who live in non-poor households, finished with higher education,

currently in work, have a husband with a higher level of education, and live in an urban area were also less likely to experience economic violence. Interestingly, in the year 2017, women who belonged to the Islamic faith had shown results of decreased occurrences of economic violence. It was found that women who had a husband/partner that drank alcohol were significantly associated with higher odds of economic violence. For other forms of economic violence (physical, emotional, sexual), results also showed a significant relationship with the increased occurrence of economic violence.

The results of the multivariate analysis demonstrated a high correlation between economic violence and other types of violence, including sexual, emotional, and physical violence. The probability of experiencing economic violence was considerably increased by having more children, less education, and a husband who consumes alcohol, according to measures of socioeconomic inequality and other explanatory variables.

Regarding the extent of change in economic violence experienced by Filipino women for years 2013 and 2017, it was found that the breadth or spread of economic violence against Filipino women increased between the two years.

The empirical model explains the odds of a woman experiencing economic violence. The explanatory variables include demographic variables such as the age of the female, age of the male, number of living children in the household, religion, and whether the woman is from a rural or urban area. The explanatory variables also include behavioral variables of whether the husband/partner has inflicted physical, emotional, and sexual abuse on the woman, and whether he drinks alcohol or not. Apart from these demographic and behavioral variables, this model also includes socioeconomic variables such as work status, which is a binary variable that determines whether the interviewed woman is currently working (1) or not (0). Another socioeconomic variable in this model is the woman's educational attainment of both the woman and the husband/partner. These are in the form of dummy variables, which refer to the educational attainment of the interviewed woman and her husband or partner. The corresponding value will be 0 for otherwise, and 1 for true. As dummy variables, 0 refers to otherwise, and 1 refers to true for each of these four sub-categories: No education & Incomplete primary, Complete primary, Incomplete secondary & Complete secondary, and higher education. Lastly, the explanatory variables include the household income as a dummy variable that determines which income category a family of the interviewed women belongs. As dummy variables, 0 refers to otherwise, and 1 refers to true for each category: poor and non-poor.

Conclusion

As a progressive country moving forward to development, the Philippines commits itself to contributing to the sustainable development goals or SDGs. This includes safeguarding and protecting women on SDG 5, or gender equality, and their right to work on SDG 8, or decent work and economic growth. However, as violence against women continues to prevail as a problem in the country, it is setting itself away from its target goals. Although numerous policies and programs have been instituted to address violence against Filipino women, it remains to be a growing problem in the Philippines. Our findings suggest that between 2013 and 2017, more Filipino women are experiencing economic violence but not necessarily to an extremely high degree. Additionally, results showed that the demographic variables of woman's age, place of residence, and the Islamic religion lowered the likelihood of experiencing economic violence, but the number of living children and the Protestant religion increased the likelihood of experiencing economic violence. In this case, the results concerning the number of living children support the second recommendation of enhanced implementation of the Reproductive Health Law and other programs. For the behavioral variables, physical, emotional, and sexual violence, as well as the husband's tendency to drink excessively, increase the likelihood of economic violence. This supports the last recommendation on the expansion of protection against women. Lastly, the socioeconomic variables of higher education and work status lowered the likelihood of experiencing economic violence. This suggests the need to further empower women through education and improved opportunities for work, as mentioned in the first recommendation.

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