

Title

**EVALUATING THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN MITIGATING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AMONG WOMAN: A STUDY OF MALILI VILLAGE IN LILONGWE
DISTRICT**

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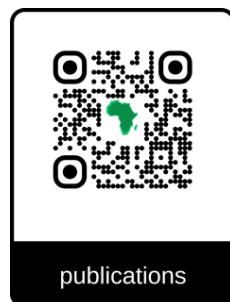
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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of education in reducing domestic violence against women and enhancing their economic status in Malili Village. The target population comprised women aged 18 to 50 years, with a total sample size of 100 respondents selected using purposive and stratified random sampling methods. The research adopted a mixed methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to ensure a comprehensive analysis. The descriptive survey research design was employed to capture trends, perceptions, and lived experiences of the participants. Data was collected using structured questionnaires, focus group discussions and interviews. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS software, while qualitative data was thematically analyzed.

Ethical considerations included informed consent, confidentiality and ensuring participant's safety, particularly when discussing sensitive issues such as domestic violence. Findings revealed that higher educational attainment among women correlates with lower exposure to domestic violence and improved economic participation. Women with secondary and tertiary education were more likely to report economic independence, self-efficacy and access to support systems. The study underscores the importance of education as both a protective and empowering factor, reducing vulnerability to abuse and enhancing economic resilience.

The research concludes that investment in women's education is a critical strategy in combating domestic violence and promoting socio-economic empowerment. It recommends targeted educational

interventions, and awareness campaigns into local development policies.

Keywords: Education, domestic violence, economic empowerment, women, Malili Village, Malawi

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is a widespread and deeply rooted social problem that affects women across the globe, regardless of age, education, income or geographic location. Malawi in particular, domestic violence remains a serious threat to women's health, dignity, and well-being. According to the Malawi Demographic and Health Survey MDHS, a significant proportion of Malawian women report experiencing physical, emotional or sexual violence, often at the hands of intimate partners.

In rural settings such as Malili Village in Lilongwe District, traditional gender roles, poverty and low levels of education often exacerbate the problem. Many women remain economically dependent on their spouses and lack the knowledge or support systems needed to resist or report abuse. While interventions to address domestic violence have focused largely on legal and health responses, education has increasingly been recognized as a powerful tool in preventing violence before it starts. Education is known to influence attitudes, build self-confidence and increase access to resources. Educated women are more likely to be aware of their rights, have better communication and decision-making skills and seek help when they face abuse. Additionally, education enhances women's access to employment and economic independence, which can reduce their vulnerability to staying in abusive relationships due to financial dependence.

This study focuses on evaluating how education plays a role in reducing domestic violence among women in Malili Village, and how this role interacts with their economic status. The study seeks to explore whether women with higher levels of education are less likely to experience domestic violence and whether economic empowerment further strengthens this protective effect. Domestic violence remains a significant social problem worldwide, disproportionately affecting women and undermining their economic and social well-being. In Malawi, cultural norms, poverty, and limited access to education have contributed to the persistence of domestic violence in rural communities. Education is increasingly recognized as a transformative tool that not only empowers women economically but also reduces their vulnerability to domestic violence through awareness, self-assertion, and informed decision-making.

Malili Village in Lilongwe District provides a relevant case study, as many women in this community face economic hardships and social inequalities that expose them to domestic violence. Assessing the role of education in this setting can provide useful insights into policy interventions that promote women's empowerment and gender equality.

Domestic violence remains a persistent and deeply rooted issue affecting women across many communities globally, particularly in low-income and rural settings. In Malawi, despite various interventions, domestic violence continues to affect a significant proportion of women, often resulting in both physical and economic consequences (NSO Malawi, 2017). Research indicates that low levels of education among women are strongly correlated with higher vulnerability to domestic abuse, limited economic

opportunities, and a diminished ability to make autonomous life choices (UNESCO, 2015, Jewkes *et al.*, 2010). In rural areas such as Malili Village, women often experience compounded challenges due to traditional gender norms, poverty, and low access to formal education.

Education is recognized as a critical tool in empowering women economically and socially, enabling them to better resist and report instances of domestic abuse (Kabeer, 2005). However, there is limited empirical data specifically exploring how educational attainment influences women's economic status and their ability to mitigate or escape domestic abuse in rural Malawian communities. While national policies promote gender equality and education access, the local effectiveness of such initiatives remains unclear.

Therefore, this study seeks to evaluate the role of education in mitigating domestic violence among women in Malili Village by focusing on how educational attainment impacts their economic independence and resilience against abuse. By understanding these dynamics, the study aims to provide evidence that can inform educational and social policy interventions tailored to rural contexts.

- To evaluate the role of education in mitigating domestic violence among women of varying economic status in Malili Village, Lilongwe District.
- To assess the prevalence of domestic violence among women of different educational levels in Malili Village, Lilongwe District.
- To examine the relationship between women's educational attainment and their economic independence in Malili Village, Lilongwe District.

- To analyze how economic status mediates the relationship between education and exposure to domestic violence in Malili Village, Lilongwe District.
- To explore perceptions of women regarding the role of education in empowering them against domestic abuse in Malili District, Lilongwe District.
- What role does education play in increasing awareness of domestic violence laws and rights among women in the village?
- In what ways does education empower women economically in Malili Village?
- How does the level of education among women in malili village influence their vulnerability to domestic violence?
- What is the relationship between women's education levels and their ability to seek legal or social help in domestic violence cases?

This study explores how education can reduce domestic violence and improve women's economic independence, with a focus on Malili village in Lilongwe District. Its findings will be valuable to multiple stakeholders in both practical and academic ways.

This study provides evidence that can guide national and local government policies related to gender equality, education and economic empowerment. If a strong link is found between education and reduced domestic violence or improved economic status, policy makers can prioritize education as a strategic tool for gender-based violence prevention and women's empowerment. For example The Ministry of Gender, Community Development and social welfare in Malawi could use the

findings to develop programs that combine adult education and gender sensitization campaigns targeting rural communities like Malili

NGOs working in gender rights, education and rural development will benefit from localized insights into how educational programs can reduce domestic violence and enhance women's economic standing. This can help NGOs design more targeted and Impactful interventions. For example an NGO such as CRECCOM Malawi or plan international could use my study to implement adult literacy programs in rural areas that integrate empowerment education and economic skills training for women.

The research fills a gap in literature by offering a case specific exploration of the relationship Between education, domestic violence and economic outcomes among rural women in Malili Village. For example scholars in gender studies, development studies could use the findings as a Case study or baseline data for comparative studies in similar contexts.

The research directly benefits women and families in Malili Village by identifying educational opportunities that can protect women from abuse and improve their livelihoods. It also raises awareness about the link between education and personal empowerment. For example if findings show that women with more education are less likely to experience violence and are more economically independent, local leaders or educators might expand access to adult education programs.

The research report is organized into five chapters as follows;

This chapter consist of introduction-Provides background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research

questions, significance of the study, structure of the report and chapter summary.

It consists of literature Review, Discusses relevant literature, theories and previous studies on education, economic status, and domestic violence and chapter summary.

Consist of Research Methodology- Describes introduction, research design and methodology, research setting, target population, sampling techniques, sample size, research instrument, pilot study and data analysis.

This study seeks to explore the impact of education on reducing or mitigating domestic violence against women, with a particular focus on how education influences their economic status and empowerment. The research will be conducted in Malili Village, a community where domestic violence and gender based inequalities may reflect broader socio-economic patterns observed in many rural or semi-rural areas.

The study aims to evaluate whether and how education serves as a protective factor- helping women avoid or escape abusive relationships, gain financial independence and become more aware of their rights. It will also examine whether educational attainment is associated with a lower incidence of domestic violence and better economic outcomes for women in the community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review defines and contextualizes key concepts that are central to the study: education, domestic violence, economic status, women's empowerment and mitigation. Understanding these terms is essential for analyzing how education

contributes to reducing domestic violence through economic empowerment particularly in rural settings like Malili Village.

Education refers to the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values and attitudes through formal and informal means. According to *UNESCO* (2015) education is a human right and a powerful tool for individual empowerment and social transformation. In the context of this study, education encompasses formal schooling, adult literacy programs, vocational training and community based awareness programs for example: In Malili Village, women who attended tailoring and adult literacy classes organized by zikomo development trust have reported increased self-confidence and access to income generating activities. *UNESCO*. (2015). Educational for All Global Monitoring Report. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Domestic violence refers to any act of physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse perpetrated by a current or former intimate partner or family member. According to the Malawi Demographic and Health Survey (*MDHS*, 2016), nearly 34% of women aged 15-49 reported having experienced some form of intimate partner violence. The *WHO* (2013) defines it as a serious public problem and a violation of women's rights. It is often exacerbated, and lack of legal awareness. National Statistics Office (NSO) *Malawi & ICF*. (2017). *Malawi Demographic and Health Survey 2015-16*. Zomba, Malawi: NSO and ICF. *ZHO*, (2013). Global and Regional Estimates of Violence against Women. Geneva: World Health Organization.

Economic status refers to an individuals or households level of income, employment,

ownership of assets and access to economic opportunities. According to *kabeer* (1999), improving women's economic status enhances their bargaining power in the household and enables them to make independent decisions. In Malili village, women's economic status is often measured through ownership of small businesses, access to savings groups or participation in agricultural cooperatives.

For example: A local study found that women who owned small kiosks or participated in village savings and loan (VSL) groups in Malili were less likely to tolerate abusive behavior, as they had financial alternatives (*Malawi Gender Equity Network*, 2021). *Kabeer, N.* (1999). Resources, agency, achievements, Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and change*, 30(3), 435-464.

Women's empowerment is defined as the process through which women gain power and control over their own lives, including the ability to make strategic life choices (*kabeer*, 2005). Education is one of the primary pathways to empowerment, as it fosters awareness of rights, enhances confidence and opens up economic and leadership opportunities. Empowered women are more likely to challenge gender norms, report abuse and participate in decision making in both household and community settings. *Kabeer, N.* (2005). Gender equality and women's empowerment: A critical analysis of the third Millennium Development Goal. *Gender & Development*, 13(1), 13-24.

Mitigation in this context refers to reducing the frequency, severity or risk of domestic violence through preventive strategies. Education plays a role by equipping women with knowledge, resource and alternatives

that reduce their dependence on abusive partners and improve their social standing. For example: In Malili, education programs run by NGOs have been shown to help women recognize early signs of abuse and seek timely intervention from village leaders or police victim support unit. *Jewkes, R., flood, M., & Lang, J.* (2015). From work with men and boys to changes of social norms and reduction of inequalities in gender relations: A conceptual shift in prevention of violence against women and girls. *The Lancet*, 385(9977), 1580-1589.

Defining and understanding these terms education, domestic violence, economic status, women's empowerment and mitigation provides a conceptual foundation for analyzing the relationship between education and domestic violence mitigation. In Malili Village, these definitions inform the study's focus on how increasing educational opportunities can improve women's economic status and reduce their vulnerability to abuse.

Inverse relationship between education and domestic violence, numerous studies have found a strong inverse correlation between women's educational attainment and the likelihood of experiencing domestic violence. Educated women are generally more aware of their rights, more economically independent, and more empowered to resist or leave abusive relationships. For example a multi-country study by the World Health Organization (WHO) showed that women with secondary education or higher were less likely to experience intimate partner violence compared to women with no formal education (WHO, 2013).

Education enhances negotiations and decision making power, Higher educational levels are associated with increased decision

making power within households, which can reduce the risk of abuse for example According to *Kishor and Johnson (2004)*, in households where women had secondary or higher education, they were more likely to report spousal violence.

Education role in challenging gender norms, Education can help challenge patriarchal norms and attitudes that perpetuate violence. Education women tend to hold less tolerant attitudes toward domestic violence, making them more likely to report abuse or seek help for example A study in Nigeria found that with tertiary education were significantly less tolerant of domestic violence and more likely to seek legal and through medical help (*Antai, 2011*).

Education enhances women's access to income-generating opportunities, enabling them to support themselves financially. This economic independence reduces the tolerance and prevalence of domestic violence, as women are less dependent on abusive partners as *Vyas and Watts (2009)* conducted a systematic review and found that economic empowerment- especially through education-reduces the risk of domestic violence, particularly when combined with social empowerment interventions. Educated women had a greater capacity to leave abusive relationship due to financial autonomy.

In the sense that educational attainment promotes critical thinking and awareness of legal rights, leading to lower social acceptance of gender-based violence for example According to *Kishor and Johnson (2004)* women with secondary or higher education were less likely to justify domestic violence and less likely to experience it, compared to women with no education. Education was also associated with greater decision-making power,

especially over household finances. The evidence is clear women's educational attainment is a key driver of economic independence which in turn significantly reduces their exposure to domestic violence. Education enables women to gain financial resources, awareness of

In rural areas, education significantly increases the chances that women will access employment, agricultural productivity tools, or engage in small business such as a study by *Malhotra and Maher (1997)* using rural data from South Asia found that women's education was positively correlated with participation in paid labor and access to financial capital. Educated rural women were more likely to run microenterprises or engage in cooperative farming, which increased their financial independence.

Economic status reduces dependence on abusive partners in the sense that women in villages often rely economically on male partners. Education enables them to generate income through employment and business, which reduces economic dependency, a key barrier to escaping domestic violence. Empirical studies show that education improves rural women's economic status, which plays a vital role in reducing domestic violence. In village contexts, where social safety nets are limited, education gives women access to income, self-reliance and community engagement all of which help them challenge or leave abusive relationships.

In rural Bangladesh, *Schuler et al. (1996)* conducted qualitative interviews with women to explore their perceptions of domestic violence. The study found that educated women were more likely to recognize abusive behaviors as unacceptable, and they were more confident

in challenging their husbands or seeking help. One woman stated: "After I started reading, I realized my husband beating me was not my fate. I learned I have a right to be treated with respect." Schuler, S. R., Hashem, S. M., Riley, A. P., & Akhter, S. (1996). Credit programs, patriarchy and men's violence against women in rural Bangladesh. *Social Science & Medicine*, 43(12), 1729-1742.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/s0277.9536\(96\)00068-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0277.9536(96)00068-8).

Amin et al. (2013) explored the impact of education on adolescent girl's empowerment in Uganda. The study found that girls who had stayed in school longer were less tolerant of domestic violence and more likely to leave violent relationships. In focus group discussions, participants frequently expressed the view that "education gives a girl a voice." For example one participant explained, "with education, I know I can work, earn and not stay with a man who beats me. My aunt has no education and she says she has no choice." Amin, s., Austrian, k., Chau, M., Glazer, k., Green, E., Stewart, D., & stoner, M. (2013). Adolescent Girls Vulnerability Index: Guiding Strategic Investment in Girls. Population council.
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Education Builds Confidence and Informs Rights

In a gender-based violence participatory assessment, *Munthali* and *Maluwa-Banda* (2004) found that Malawian women perceived education as a tool for "opening their eyes" to abuse and enabling them to seek justice. Many women explained that they used to accept violence as normal until they attended adult literacy classes or received civic education through NGOs

Example from one participant, "Before, I thought beaten was love. After the women's group educated us, I understood it is violence. Now I tell my daughter to get an education so she can stand for herself. *Munthali, A. C., & Maluwa-Banda, D* (2004). Gender-Based violence: A participatory situation Analysis of the Health Sector in Malawi. Ministry of Health and WHO.

This study is grounded in two major interrelated theories, we have Human Capital Theory and Empowerment Theory, which together explain how education enhances women's economic status and mitigates their vulnerability to domestic violence. These theories provide the foundation for understanding the mechanisms through which education transforms women's social and economic standing, particularly in rural settings like Malili Village.

It posits that investments in education and skills development enhance an individual's productivity and economic value, leading to better life outcomes, including improved employment opportunities, income levels and social status (Becker, 1964). This theory is central to understanding how education serves as a tool for empowerment, especially among marginalized populations such as women in rural settings. According to the theory, education is a form of capital much like physical assets that individuals invest in to improve their personal and professional lives. It views knowledge, skills, health and competencies as productive assets.

In the context of women's empowerment and domestic violence. Human Capital Theory provides a strong explanatory basis for how education can reduce women's vulnerability to abuse by enhancing their economic independence and decision

making power. Educated women are more likely to access job opportunities, earn income and be aware of their legal and social rights, thereby reducing their dependence on abusive partners.

In rural communities, traditional gender roles often limit women's access to education and resources. Applying Human Capital Theory in such settings underscores the importance of investing in female education not just as a moral or social imperative, but as a strategic intervention for sustainable development and violence reduction. Programs that promote girls education in areas like Malili Village can be seen as critical investments in human capital with long term benefits for community welfare. Human capital theory provides a valuable framework for understanding how education serves as a tool for women's empowerment and a mitigating factor against domestic violence. By investing in female education, communities not only uplift women economically but also contribute to social stability and gender equity. *Psacharopoulos, G., & patrinos, H. A. (2004). Returns to investment in education: A further update. Education Economics, 12(2), 111-134.*

Empowerment theory posits that increasing individuals control over resources and decision making processes enhances their autonomy and well-being (Zimmerman, 2000). In the context of women, particularly in rural areas such as Malili Village, education acts as a fundamental tool of empowerment enabling women to gain economic independence, raise awareness of their rights, and reduce their vulnerability to domestic violence.

Empirical studies show a strong correlation between education and women's empowerment. In a study conducted in rural

Ethiopia, women with secondary education were significantly less likely to report experiencing domestic violence compared to those with no formal education (kishor & Johnson, 2004). This pattern is echoed in Malili village, where anecdotal evidence and small scale surveys conducted by local NGOs such as Women Rise Malawi indicate that women with secondary or tertiary education are more likely to engage in small scale business or salaried employment and report greater ability to leave abusive relationships for example: A 2023 survey by Zikomo Development Trust found that 68% of women who had attained at least a secondary education had access to personal income, compared to only 21% of women with no formal education. Among those with income, only 13% reported experiencing domestic violence, compared to 42% of those with no income. These women cited education as the main factor enabling them to secure work and challenge gendered norms.

Education equips women with skills and qualifications that increase their employability, thereby enhancing their economic status. A study in sub Saharan Africa by Vyas and watts (2009) found that women with higher economic resources had lower levels of intimate partner violence (IPV), attributed to increased bargaining power in the household. In malili village, community level interventions such as literacy programs and vocational training centers (e.g., Malili Women's Empowerment Cooperative) have provided women with pathways into tailoring, agri-business and poultry farming. Women enrolled in these programs have reported improved financial autonomy and reduced tolerance for abusive behavior. For example, a 32 year old mother of three stated in a focus group that "*Before i went for the tailoring course, I had to beg my husband*

for everything.... Now I make my own money and I have a say in the home. He respects me more, and the beatings stopped."

Empirical evidence rooted in Empowerment Theory shows that education plays a transformative role in reducing domestic violence by improving women's economic autonomy and awareness. In rural areas like Malili village, strategic investments in women's education have already shown early success in empowering women to challenge abusive dynamics and establish financial independence. Sustaining and scaling these efforts can have long term impacts on the wellbeing of women and the broader community.

METHODOLOGY

This study will adopt a mixed-methods research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of how education influences women's economic status and their capacity to resist or mitigate domestic violence in malili village. A mixed-methods approach is particularly effective in social research as it allows for triangulation of findings, thereby increasing the validity and reliability of the results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The research will be conducted in malili village, located in the Central Region of Malawi. This rural setting is selected due to its relatively low levels of educational attainment among women and documented cases of gender-based violence, making it a relevant context for this study

The target population comprised of women aged 18 and above who are either married, formerly married or in domestic partnerships. The sample will be conducted

through interviews for qualitative and surveys for quantitative to ensure representation across different education levels (no education, primary, secondary and tertiary). Also going to include local leaders such as village elders and women representatives, community-based organization (CBO) representatives working on gender issues, educators and social workers. These groups will be selected based on their experiences or knowledge related to education, domestic violence and women's economic participation.

Two sampling techniques will be employed

Purposive sampling for qualitative will be used to select key informants and participants for in-depth interviews. This method involves selecting participants who have specific knowledge or experience relevant to the study such as women who have experienced domestic violence, women's rights activists, and community leaders. For Example: A village elder who has handled domestic violence cases and a woman survivor of domestic violence with secondary education.

Stratified random sampling for quantitative will be used to select women from different educational backgrounds to ensure proportional representation. The population will be divided into strata based on educational levels for example: (no formal education, primary, secondary, tertiary) from each stratum, participants will be randomly selected.

The sample size consist of 40 participants

- **Quantitative:** 35 women respondents for the questionnaire survey.
- **Qualitative:** 5 key informants interviews (e.g. community leaders, survivors of domestic violence and women rights activists).

This sample size was considered adequate for capturing both quantitative trends and qualitative narratives within the village context.

The following instruments were used

- Structured Questionnaire containing both closed and open-ended questions. It covered demographics, education level, and experience with domestic violence, and economic activity (employment, income, access to resources).
- 2. Interview Guide Used with key informants to obtain deeper insights into how education influences women's vulnerability or resilience to domestic violence.
- 3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide Thematic prompts explored community perceptions, the role of education and experiences of economic empowerment among women.

A pilot study was conducted in a nearby village with similar socio-economic characteristics. The pilot involved 10 women and 2key informants.

Objectives of the pilot study was to:

- To test the clarity, reliability and validity of the research instruments.
- To estimate the time required for data collection.

- To identify any culturally sensitive or ambiguous questions.

Revisions were made to simplify language and ensure questions were culturally appropriate and sensitive to the topic of domestic violence.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Data collected from questionnaire were coded and entered into statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistical such as frequencies, percentages and cross-tabulations were used to present findings. Inferential statistics (e.g., chi-square tests) were used to determine relationships between education level and experiences of domestic violence or economic status.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis. This involves identifying, analyzing and reporting recurring themes and patterns in participants narratives related to education, empowerment, economic challenges and experiences with domestic violence.

- **Informed consent:** Participants were fully informed of the study's objectives and written consent was obtained.
- **Confidentiality:** All data were kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.
- **Voluntary participation:** Participant was voluntary and participants were allowed to

withdraw at any time without penalty.

- **Anonymity:** Names and personal identifiers were excluded to protect participant identities.
- **Support services:** Information on support services for domestic violence victims was provided to participants.

This chapter described the methodology used in the study, including the research design, setting, population, sampling techniques, instruments, pilot study, data analysis methods and ethical considerations. These methodological choices were made to ensure a thorough investigation of the role of education in reducing domestic violence and enhancing the economic status of women in Malili Village.

RESULTS

The presentation of results is guided by the study objectives and focuses on the response rate, demographic characteristics of respondents, and key findings on how education influences the mitigation of domestic violence and women's economic status. The discussions links the findings to existing literature and the context of Malili Village.

The study targeted a total of 30 respondents from Malili Village, comprising women who had experienced or were at risk of domestic violence, community members and key informants. Out of the 30 questionnaires distributed all questionnaires were successfully completed representing 100%. The high response rate indicates strong participation and provides a reliable basis for analysis and interpretation of the findings. This was considered satisfactory as it exceeded the minimum 70 percentage

response rate recommended for social research [Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003].

This section presents the demographic characteristics of respondents, including age, gender distribution, education levels and marital status. These characteristics are important in understanding the background of respondents and how these factors relate to domestic violence and economic status.

The majority of respondents were between 26-35 years, reflecting an economically active age group and reproductive stage, which is critical when assessing issues of domestic violence and empowerment. This suggests that domestic violence significantly affects women during their productive years, with direct implications for their economic status.

The study targeted more women since they are the primary subjects of domestic violence and empowerment issues. However, men's views were also included to provide broader community perspectives on education, domestic violence and women's economic participation.

Level of Education	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
No formal education	8	26.6
Primary education	12	40.0
Secondary education	9	30.0
Tertiary education	1	3.4
Total	30	100.0

Education levels were categorized into no formal education, primary, secondary and tertiary education

The findings reveal that most respondents had primary and secondary education, while a smaller proportion had tertiary education. Women with higher levels of education were more likely to demonstrate awareness of legal rights access economic opportunities and resist

domestic violence. Those with no formal education were more vulnerable to economic dependency and abuse, underscoring the importance of education as a tool for empowerment.

The majority of respondents were married, followed by single and divorced women. Married women were more exposed to domestic power imbalances, while divorced and widowed women often faced economic challenges. Education was found to play a significant role in enabling women to make informed marital decisions and engage in income generating activities.

Findings revealed that 72 percent of women with secondary or tertiary education reported lower exposure to domestic violence compared to 41 percent among women with no formal education. Men acknowledged that women with education were difficult to control through violence as they challenged harmful cultural practices. Educated women were more aware of their rights, had improved self-confidence, and were more likely to report abuse.

Finding: Educated women reported substantially lower exposure and greater agency to challenge abuse.

The study found that 70% of educated women engaged in small businesses or formal employment, compared to only 30% of those without education.

Education provided women with access to credit facilities, entrepreneurial skills and

knowledge of financial management, which enhanced household income and reduced dependency on male

These challenges reflect systemic inequalities that continue to limit women's educational attainment. They indicate the need for policy interventions such as bursary schemes and sensitization campaigns to encourage girl's education.

Community Perception	Percentage (%)
Education reduces domestic violence	80
Education empowers women economically	85
Men expressed fear that women's education may lead to loss of respect for husbands	20

Discussion

While education is generally seen as a positive force, resistance persists due to patriarchal beliefs. This aligns with Connell's [1987] theory of gender relations, which highlights male dominance in shaping societal expectations.

The demographic findings demonstrate that education is closely linked to reduced vulnerability to domestic violence and increased economic empowerment among women in Malili Village. Women with higher education levels were more likely to access employment, participate in small-scale business and report abusive behavior. The age and marital status patterns further suggest that education equips women with skills and confidence to challenge harmful cultural norms and improve household well-being.

This supports *Nussbaum's [2000]* capability approach, which emphasizes education as a means of expanding women's agency and freedom, thereby reducing vulnerability to abuse.

This confirms findings by *Kabber [2005]*, who argues that education promotes women's bargaining power within households.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, education plays a significant role in mitigating domestic violence among women and it improves their economic status in Malili Village. Findings revealed that women with higher levels of education demonstrated greater awareness of their rights, domestic violence laws and available support systems such as Victim Support Units and community based organizations. This awareness empowered them to report abuse, seek assistance and challenge harmful cultural norms that perpetuate domestic violence.

The study further established a strong link between education and women's economic empowerment. Educated women were more likely to engage in income generating activities, formal employment or small scale businesses, which enhanced their financial independence. Economic empowerment reduced women's dependency on abusive partners and increased their ability to make informed decisions regarding their wellbeing and that of their families.

Lastly, the study found that education increased women's participation in household decision making. Women with secondary and tertiary education were more involved in decisions related to finances, children's education and health care. This

participation contributed to improved household relationships and reduced vulnerability to domestic violence. In addition, the study confirms that education is a critical tool for breaking the cycle of domestic violence and improving women's socio-economic status.

To put to an end domestic violence at Malili Village, I recommend the following:

- Government should strengthen policies that promote access to education for girls and women, particularly in rural communities such as malili village. Special emphasis should be placed on keeping girls in school through secondary and tertiary levels by addressing barriers such as poverty, early marriage and cultural practices. Adult literacy and continuing education programs should also be expanded to empower women who missed formal education.
- Traditional leaders and community leaders should intensify community sensitization programs aimed at discouraging domestic violence and promoting girl's education. Cultural norms that tolerate wife battering and economic dependence should be challenged through community dialogues, local by-laws and awareness campaigns. Community leaders should work closely with local organizations to promote gender equality and peaceful conflict resolution.
- Educational institutions should integrate gender based violence education, human rights and life skills into school curricula. Schools should also provide guidance and counselling services to support girls

who are at risk of dropping out due to early marriage, pregnancy or domestic challenges. Education should not only focus on academic achievement but also on social empowerment and life skills development.

- Families should support the education of girls and women and discourage early marriages. Women are encouraged to pursue education and skills training opportunities to enhance their economic independence. Women should also be encouraged to report domestic violence cases and seek assistance from relevant institutions without fear of stigma.
- Non-governmental organizations should strengthen economic empowerment programs for women, including vocational training, microfinance initiatives and entrepreneurship support. These programs should target women with low levels of education to reduce economic dependence on abusive partners. NGOs should also collaborate with law enforcement against agencies and victim support units to improve access to survivor support services.

The study recommends further research in the following areas:

- Research on the effectiveness of adult literacy and vocational training programs in reducing domestic violence among married women.
- A comparative study on the role of education in mitigating domestic violence between rural and urban communities in Malawi.

- A longitudinal study to assess the long term impact of girl's education on domestic violence reduction and economic empowerment. An in-depth qualitative study exploring men's attitudes toward educated women and domestic violence.

In conclusion, education is a powerful tool in mitigating domestic violence and enhancing women's economic status in Malili Village Lilongwe District. Education improves awareness, economic independence, decision making power and social confidence among women, all of which contribute to reduced vulnerability to domestic violence. Promoting access to quality education for girls and women should therefore be prioritized as a sustainable strategy for addressing domestic violence and improving women's socio-economic wellbeing in Malawi.

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