

Abstracts

Attitudes toward wife beating among Qatari men and women: An analysis of survey data

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The objective of this study is to explore the attitudes of Qatari men and women towards wife beating for transgression of gender norms. Data for this study came from the 2012 Qatar Omnibus Survey, a cross-sectional survey of a nationally representative sample of 788 Qatari men and women aged 18 and above. This survey was conducted by the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute of Qatar University. Men and women were asked if they found wife beating justifiable under different scenarios of gender norm transgressions, such as leaving the house without husband's permission or disrespecting in-laws. We evaluated these attitudes by key demographic factors. Overall, the level of acceptance of wife beating among Qataris is medium compared to other countries in the region. As expected, women were less likely to support wife beating compared to men, and university-educated women were more likely to oppose wife beating. Showing disrespect for husband was the most agreed common reason for both men and women to justify wife beating.

Extended abstract

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Introduction and Background: The 2011-2016 Qatar National Development Strategy (NDS) report shows a rise in domestic violence against women and children in Qatar since 2004 and expresses concerns about the rising trends of violence against women and its implications. In Qatar, like many other traditional societies, wife beating is considered one of the common forms of violence against women. Although there are couple of studies on the prevalence, degree and forms of gender violence in Qatar, to our knowledge, there are hardly any studies on the attitudes towards domestic violence. Comprehending the underlying attitudes towards wife beating may be indispensable to understand dynamics of wife beating and to design effective interventions.

Objective: The objective of this study is to explore the attitudes of Qatari men and women towards wife beating for transgression of gender norms.

Methods: Data for this study came from the 2012 Qatar Omnibus Survey, a cross-sectional survey of a nationally representative sample of 788 Qatari men and women aged 18 and above. This survey was conducted by the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute of Qatar University. Men and women were asked if they found wife beating justifiable under the following six scenarios of gender norm transgressions: (i) if wife goes out to market without telling husband; (ii) if wife visits friends without telling husband; (iii) if wife visits relatives without telling husband; (iv) if wife neglects own children; (v) if wife shows disrespect for husband; and (vi) if wife shows disrespect for parents-in-law. The study evaluated these attitudes by key demographic factors using both bivariate and multivariate techniques.

Results: Table 1 shows the proportion of men and women who justified wife beating for transgression of different gender norms. Overall, one-third of the respondents justified wife beating for at least one of the reasons (bottom row) and the level of support for

wife beating was slightly higher among Qatari men (35.6%) compared to Qatari women (29.8%). Showing disrespect for husband was the most agreed common reason as a justification for wife beating (29.0%), followed by showing disrespect for parents-in-laws (21.7%) and neglecting own children (15.6%).

Table 1: Proportion who justified wife beating for transgression of different gender norms by gender of respondents

Categories	Male	Female	All
Going out to market without telling husband	8.8%	4.6%	6.6%
Visiting friends without telling husband	9.2%	6.1%	7.6%
Visiting relatives without telling husband	6.1%	4.7%	5.4%
Neglecting own children	15.3%	15.9%	15.6%
Showing disrespect for husband	30.6%	27.5%	29.0%
Showing disrespect for parents-in-law	24.0%	19.5%	21.7%
For at least one of the reasons mentioned above	35.6%	29.8%	32.6%

Table 2 shows the proportion of men and women who justified wife beating for at least one of the reasons mentioned by level of education. Data show that while among male respondents' attitudes towards wife-beating did not vary much by level of education, among female respondents with a university degree the support of wife beating was almost half (16.7%) compared to female respondents with no university degree.

Table 2: Proportion of men and women who justified wife beating by level of education completed

Highest level of schooling completed	Male	Female	All
Did not complete any schooling	36.6	33.6	35.0
Completed a high school degree	36.4	34.6	35.5
Completed a university degree	32.9	16.7	23.9

Table 3 shows proportion of men and women who justified wife beating by age groups. This table reveals some interesting variations in age patterns of attitudes towards wife beating. Among male respondents, support for wife beating was highest among the youngest group (46.1%), gradually declining with age.. Among females, oldest group showed the highest support for wife beating (37.7%), followed by the youngest group (32%).

Table 3: Proportion of men and women who justified wife beating by age groups

Age groups	Male	Female
18-29	46.1	32.0
30-39	35.4	21.1
40-49	28.2	26.6
50+	27.2	37.7

Conclusions: The level of acceptance of wife beating among Qataris is medium compared to other countries in the region. While education does not matter for male respondents, university educated women are least supportive of wife beating. There are interesting gender and age variations in the attitudes towards wife beating. Multivariate analysis will shed more light on the complex relationships between attitudes towards wife beating and other demographic factors. Multivariate analysis will be done in the final version of the paper.