EXPLORING THE EFFECT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTION

AKPAN, FIDELIA OBONGAMA
Department of Social Science Education
Faculty of Education
University of Lagos
+2348062105631
fakpan1@gmail.com

Abstract
This study examined the impact of domestic violence on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Eti-Osa Local Government Area, Lagos State, Nigeria. Domestic violence is a pervasive social problem that affects not only the family but also the larger society. Children from violent homes often struggle with emotional imbalances, behavioral problems, and poor academic performance. This descriptive survey sampled 372 students from selected public junior secondary schools in Eti-Osa LGA. Questionnaire were used to collect data, which were analyzed using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests. The findings revealed that students' knowledge of domestic violence concepts in social studies help them to appreciate the importance of peaceful homes on active learning. The study recommends that teachers incorporate conflict resolution, and educational counseling into Social Studies curricula to promote peaceful coexistence and support students from violent homes.
Keywords: Domestic Violence, Academic Performance

Introduction

The family is a crucial institution within society, forming the foundation of socialization and emotional stability for children (Ekiran, 2020). Every individual is born into a family structure, which ideally provides an environment of love, care, and affection that nurtures a child's growth and learning. However, children from violent households, where affection and stability are lacking, often experience significant disruptions to their emotional and academic development. Such an environment can hinder a child's ability to concentrate in school, as memories of violence and trauma overshadow their learning experience (Fantuzzo, *et al*, 2016).

The impact of domestic violence on children is substantial and far-reaching. Children exposed to violence may experience both immediate and long-term psychological imbalances, which can impair their social skills and academic performance. Witnessing such violence can lead to short-term trauma and long-term behavioral issues, as children may internalize these behaviors and eventually replicate them, perpetuating what some scholars call the "continuity hypothesis" (Tony, 2022). According to Wexler (2019), children from violent homes often suffer from anxiety, fear, and concentration difficulties, which directly impact their school performance and willingness to engage in school activities.

Domestic violence is a pervasive problem worldwide, affecting individuals across all races, ages, and socioeconomic backgrounds. While both men and women can be victims, women and children often bear the brunt of domestic abuse, which can include physical assault, emotional neglect, economic deprivation, and other forms of abuse (Sanni, 2015). Such violence within the home can create a chaotic environment that severely disrupts the educational and emotional development of children. As a result, these children frequently experience issues with memory, attention, communication, and social relationships in school, which collectively hinder their academic success. Domestic violence is a pervasive global issue, affecting the mental health and educational outcomes of millions of children (World Health Organization, 2013). Children who witness domestic violence often imitate the behaviours they observe, which can lead to the adoption of violent or maladaptive coping strategies. This can result in a generational cycle of abuse and dependence, where violence is normalized as an aspect of intimate relationship (Bandura, 2017).

The effects of domestic violence can have far-reaching consequences, including decreased academic performance, social interactions, and future relationship (Holt *et al*, 2018). Furthermore, domestic violence can contribute to social fragmentation and psychological trauma among children, extending beyond the family to the border community (Koeing *et al*, 2013). Despite laws

established to protect individuals' right and welfare, domestic violence persists, hindering children's academic progress and diminishing their self-worth (United Nations Children's Fund, 2017).

It is important to note that domestic violence is a serious issue that affects children's academic and emotional well-being, as well as their long-term behavior and social relationships. As noted by (Fantuzzo, *et al*, 2016), the home environment is a critical factor in a child's educational journey. Addressing domestic violence and creating a safe home environment is essential for fostering academic success and healthy social development among children, ultimately contributing to a more stable and productive society.

The study focuses on Eti-Osa Local Government Area, Lagos State, Nigeria. It is one of the 20 LGAs in Lagos State located in the eastern part of the state. The LGA is characterized by a mix of urban and suburban areas, with a high population density. Junior secondary students are in a critical phase of their educational development, and their experiences during this period can have a lasting impact on their academic achievement and future prospects. Public junior secondary schools in Eti-Osa LGA are attended by students with diverse backgrounds, including those from low-income families, who may be more vulnerable to the effects of domestic violence.

Statement of the Problem

Domestic violence is a pervasive social problem that affects millions of people worldwide, including children and adolescents. In Nigeria, domestic violence is a significant concern, with studies indicating that a substantial proportion of children and adolescents are exposed to domestic violence. Exposure to domestic violence can have far-reaching consequences for children's and adolescent's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being, including their academic performance.

Despite the potential impact of domestic violence on academic performance, there is a dearth of research on this topic, particularly in the context

of junior secondary school students in Nigeria. Furthermore, most existing studies have focused on the perspectives of teachers, parents, or counselors, with little attention paid on the perception and experiences of the students themselves.

This study aims to address this knowledge gap by exploring the impact of domestic violence on academic performance from the perceptive of junior secondary school students. Specifically, the study seeks to investigate the students' perception of the effects of domestic violence on their attendance, concentration, and overall academic achievement.

Purpose of the Study

The study sought to explore the effects of domestic violence on academic performance as perceived by junior secondary school students in Eti-Osa Local Government Area, Lagos State, Nigeria. Specifically, aims to:

3. Explore the effect of domestic violence on students' academic performance.

4. Examine how students' perceptions of domestic violence affect their learning readiness.

5. Suggest solutions to mitigate the effect of domestic violence on academic performance in Social Studies.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following questions:

3. What are the effect of domestic violence on students' academic performance?

4. What are students' perceptions on the effect of domestic violence on their academic performance?

5. What solutions can address the effect of domestic violence on student's academic performance in Social Studies?

Research Hypotheses

The study proposes the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no statistically significant effect of domestic violence on students' academic performance.

2. Student's perceptions of domestic violence does not have statistically significant effect on their academic performance.

3. No solution proves to have statistical significant effect in addressing the effects of domestic violence on student's academic performance in Social Studies.

Theoretical Framework

This study employs the Feminist Theory by Mary Wollstonecraft to understand domestic violence. Mary Wollstonecraft's Feminist Theory, introduced in 1794, and extends the ideas of feminism by advocating for equality between men and women and analyzing gender inequality. It examines the distinct roles and experiences of men and women, especially in patriarchal societies where traditional gender roles persist. In African societies, customary laws often reinforce gender inequality by denying women rights to property ownership, land inheritance, and legal protection after divorce. Feminist theorists argue that addressing these systemic inequalities is critical to reducing domestic violence, as gender inequality fuels male dominance and female subordination, which perpetuate violence against women. For example, Rosemary Ofei-Aboagye's research on Ghana highlighted that domestic violence is deeply tied to women's subordinate social and economic positions. She argued that changing the social structure that teaches women to be dependent on men is essential to tackling domestic violence. Feminist theorists assert that terms like "wife-beating" or "women abuse" better capture the gendered nature of domestic violence, framing it as a structural mechanism of patriarchal control over women through oppression, economic dependence, and societal objectification

Research Methods

This study employs a descriptive survey design to examine students' perceptions on the effect of domestic violence on academic performance. The

population covers ten junior secondary school wards in Eti-Osa Local Government Area, Lagos State. In this case, the total number of secondary schools in the area includes 19 public and 46 private schools, amounting to 65 schools and a total student population of 18,924. However, the study specifically targets JSS 2 and JSS 3 students, totaling 12,396 students. This selection was based on the relevance of these students' perspectives in understanding how domestic violence affects academic performance in secondary schools within the area. The researcher believed that JSS 2 and 3 students would provide valuable insights, as they were likely to respond thoughtfully to the questionnaire, making them suitable for gathering the study's data.

The study utilizes a purposive simple random sampling. First, the researcher identifies a specific population, JSS 2 and JSS 3 students, totaling 12,396 students. This selection was based on the relevance of these students' perspectives in understanding how domestic violence affects academic performance in secondary schools within the area. Then, using the simple random sampling techniques, and with the aid of a sample size calculator to determine the sample size of 372 students from a population of 12,396, calculated at a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level. The target population consisted only of JSS2 and JSS3 students. One school was purposively selected from each of the ten school wards in Eti-Osa Local Government Area, resulting in a total of ten schools and 372 students (181 boys and 191 girls) being sampled. The selection was guided by the Secondary Schools Population Database from Education District 3 Eti-Osa, Lagos State to ensure adequate representation within the study's time constraints.

Data was collected using a Today Students Perception of Domestic Violence Questionnaire (TSPDVQ) designed on a four-point Likert Scale, validated by two experts and 0.84 reliability index was established by means of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Responses were gathered, tabulated, organized, and statistically analyzed using proper descriptive statistical

tools such as, mean, standard deviation, and inferential statistical tool such as chi-square was employed for the hypothesis testing.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the effect of domestic violence on students' academic performance?

Table 1: Findings about research question 1

Response	Numbers	Frequency of Response		Percentages	Response	Total (%)
		(SA+A)	*(SD+D)*	*(SA+A)%*	*(SD+D)%*	
JSS2	186	97	89	52.2%	47.8%	100%
JSS3	186	92	94	49.5%	50.5%	100%
TOTAL	372	189	183	50.8%	49.2%	100%

Source: Questionnaire administered

Table 1 showed that one-hundred and eighty-nine (189) of the respondents ticked strongly agree (SA) and agree (A) whereas one- hundred and eighty-three (183) ticked strongly disagree (SD) and disagree (D). This shows that there is an inverse relationship between domestic violence and students' academic performance. This means that the more there is domestic violence, students' academic performance will drop drastically.

Research Question 2: What are students' views on the impact of domestic violence on their academic performance?

Table 2: Findings about research question 2

S/N	Questionnaire Items	R.S	F	%	Decision
1.		SA	103	28	Agree
		A	98	26	
		D	88	24	
		SD	83	22	
	Students from violent homes suffer from emotional imbalance and are usually aggressive.	∑	372	100	
2.		SA	123	33	Agree
		A	98	26	
		D	80	22	
		SD	71	19	
	Students from violent homes lack parental supervision.	∑	372	100	

3.	Domestic violence hinders learners' abilities to acquire new knowledge.	SA A D SD	202 70 69 31	54 19 19 8	Agree
		∑	372	100	
4.	Students from violent homes suffer psychological problems that adversely affect their cooperation with learning.	SA A D SD	197 105 44 26	53 28 12 7	Agree
		∑	100	100	

Source: Questionnaire administered

Extract from the table 2 above showed that 54% of the students agreed that Students from violent homes suffer from emotional imbalance and are usually aggressive while 46% of the students did not agree. 59% of the students agreed that students from violent homes lack parental supervision whereas 41% did not agree. However, it was agreed by 73% of the students that domestic violence hinders learners' abilities to acquire new knowledge while 27% did not agree. Also, 81% of the students agreed that students from violent homes suffer psychological problems that adversely affect their cooperation with learning while 19% did not agree.

Research Question 3: What solutions can address the impact of domestic violence on student's academic performance in Social Studies?

Table 3: Findings regarding research question 3

Number of Respondents	Frequency of Response		Percentages (%)	'Response (%)	
	(SA + A)	(SD + D)	(SA + A)%	(SD + D)%	Suggested Solutions
186	159	27	85.5%	14.5%	Counseling and Public corporation
186	140	46	75.2%	24.7%	Legal Sanctions and Temporal Separation
372	299	73	80.4%	19.6%	

Source: Questionnaire administered

Data from Table 3 showed that one-hundred and fifty-nine (159) of the respondents ticked strongly agree (SA) and agree (A) whereas twenty-seven (27) ticked strongly disagree (SD) and disagree (D). This shows that if the society employs the solutions suggested by the researcher such as counselling, legal sanctions, temporary separation, and public orientation, the rate of domestic violence will reduce and students' academic performances will improve in Social Studies in the selected schools in Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Hypothesis (H0$_1$)

Summary of Chi-square analysis showing students' responses, observed and expected frequencies and values on hypothesis 1 which states that there are no statistically significant effects of domestic violence on students' academic performance.

Respondents	Observed Frequency of Response	Expected Frequency of Response	(O - E)	(O - E)^2	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$	Result	
	(SA +A)		(SD+D)			X^2 cal.	
JSS 2	109	186	-77	5,929	31.88		JSS 2
JSS 3	142	186	-44	1,936	10.41		JSS 3
Total	251	377			39.36	39.36	Total

Source: Questionnaire administered   P < 0.05, df = 1

Table 4 above indicates that the chi-square tabulated value is 3.841, whereas the calculated value is 39.36. Since the tabulated value is less than the calculated, the researcher rejects H0$_1$, and the conclusion is that there is there is a statistically significant inverse relationship between domestic violence and students' academic performance.

Hypothesis (H0$_2$)

Summary of Chi-square analysis showing students' responses, observed and expected frequencies, and values on hypothesis 2, which states that student's view of domestic violence does not have statistically significant impact on their academic performance.

Respondents	Observed Frequency of Response (SA +A)	Expected Frequency of Response	(O - E) (SD +D)	(O - E)²	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$	Result X^2 cal.	
JSS 2	98	186	-83	7744	41.6		JSS 2
JSS 3	103	186	-83	6889	37.0		JSS 3
Total	201	377			78.6	78.6	Total

Source: Questionnaire administered $P < 0.05$, df = 1

Table 5 above revealed that the chi-square critical or tabulated value is 3.841, whereas the calculated value is 78.6. Since the tabulated value is less than the calculated, the researcher rejects $H0_2$, and the conclusion is that student's viewed domestic violence as having statistically significant impact on their academic performance.

Hypothesis (Ho₃)

Summary of Chi-square analysis showing students responses, observed and expected frequencies, and values on hypothesis 3, which states that no solution proves to have statistical significant effect in addressing the effect of domestic violence on student's academic performance in social studies.

Observed Frequency of Response (SA +A)	Expected Frequency of Response	(O – E) (SD +D)	(O – E)²	$\frac{(O – E)^2}{E}$	Result X^2 cal.	Respondents
97	186	-89	7921	42.59		JSS 2
92	186	-94	6561	47.51		JSS 3
189	377			90.02	90.02	Total

Source: Questionnaire administered $P < 0.05$, df = 1

Table 6 above showed that the Chi-square calculated value is 90.02, and the tabulated value is 3.841. Since the calculated value is higher than the tabulated value, the researcher rejects $H0_3$, and the conclusion is that counselling, legal sanctions, temporary separation, and public orientation are some of the solutions

that can be adopted to addressing the impact of domestic violence on student's academic performance in social studies.

Discussion of Findings

The study analyzed several research questions and hypotheses to understand the impact of domestic violence on students' behavior and academic performance in Social Studies in Eti-Osa, Lagos. For Research Question 1, about the effects of domestic violence on students' academic performance, 189 students which comprises of 50.8% of the sample agreed that there is a relationship between domestic violence and students' academic performance while 183 students comprising of 49.2% did not agree. Extract from the table 2 above showed responses regarding research question 2. It was discovered that 54% of the students agreed that Students from violent homes suffer from emotional imbalance and are usually aggressive while 46% of the students did not agree. 59% of the students agreed that students from violent homes lack parental supervision whereas 41% did not agree. However, it was agreed by 73% of the students that domestic violence hinders learners' abilities to acquire new knowledge while 27% did not agree. Also, 81% of the students agreed that students from violent homes suffer psychological problems that adversely affect their cooperation with learning while 19% did not agree. In Research Question 3, about what solutions can address the impact of domestic violence on student's academic performance in Social Studies? A total of 299 students which account for 80.4& of the sample agreed that suggestions like counselling, legal sanctions, temporary separation, and public orientation can address the impact of domestic violence on student's academic performance in Social Studies which 73 students amounting to 19.6% of the sample did not agree. The study tested three hypotheses using chi-square analysis. The results for Hypothesis 1 showed that there is a statistically significant effect of domestic violence on students' academic performance at ($x^2 = 39.36 > 3.841$). Hypothesis 2 results indicated that student's viewed domestic violence as having statistically significant impact on

their academic performance at ($x^2 = 78.6 > 3.841$). More so, Hypothesis 3 results revealed that counselling, legal sanctions, temporary separation, and public orientation are some of the solutions that can be adopted in addressing the impact of domestic violence on student's academic performance in social studies at ($x^2 = 90.02 > 3.841$)

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concludes that Social Studies education helps junior secondary students understand the importance of peaceful homes for effective learning, recognize the causes and effects of domestic violence, and learn coping strategies. This knowledge empowers students to manage conflicts at home and promotes harmony.

Additionally, the researcher's recommendations emphasize that Social Studies should cover topics like domestic violence, conflict resolution, and peaceful coexistence at the junior secondary level, as this stage is crucial for students' academic and personal growth. Qualified, dedicated teachers should lead these classes, supported by the government with a conducive learning environment and free education. Parents should foster peace at home to set positive examples, and government initiatives should raise public awareness and enact laws addressing the negative impacts of domestic violence on students and society.

References

Bandura, A. (2017). *Social Learning Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Prentice Hall

Ekiran, M. (2020). *Marriage and the Family; A Sociological Perspective*. Lagos: Rebonik Press.

Fantuzzo, J. Tighe, E., & Childs, S. (2016). Family involvement Questionnaires; A multivariate assessment of family participation in early childhood education. *Journal of educational psychology,* 92(2), 367-376. (http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.92.2.367. Accessed 4th October 2018)

Holt, S.; Buckley, H. & Whelan, S. (2018). The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children: A Systematic Review. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 32(5), 797-810.

Koenig, M.A; Lutalo, T.O; Zhao, F.; Nalugoda, F.; Wabwire-Mangen,F. & Sewankambo, N. (2013). Domestic Violence in Rural Uganda: Evidence from a Community-Based Study. Bulletin of the *World Health Organization*. 81(1), 53-60.

Sanni, S. (2015). *The killing fields*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.

Tony, J. (2022). Gender Series: Violence and Abuse of Women and Girls in Kenya. *Journal of Population Communication Africa* 1 20-25

Tony, J. (2003). Gender Series*: Violence and Abuse of Women and Girls in Kenya. Population Communication Africa* Volume II. Nairobi

United Nations Children's Fund (2017). *Ending Violence against Children: Six Strategies for Action*.

Wexler, L. (2019). *Wounded Innocents: the real victims of the war against child abuse*, Prometheus Books, Buffalo, New York.

World Health Organization (2013). *Global and Regional Estimates of Violence against Women: Prevalence and Health Effects of Intimate Partner Violence and Non-partner Sexual Violence.*