

## Perceived Effects of Domestic Violence on the Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Etche and Omuma Local Government Areas in River State

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**Abstract:** *The study examined the perceived effect of domestic violence on secondary school student in Etche and Omuma Local Government Area. The researchers formulated (3) objectives, 3 research questions and 3 hypotheses. The study made use of descriptive survey design. The population of the study consists of all Public Secondary School (SS1) students in Etche and Omuma Local Government Area. The population size was 2,100 (SS1) students. The study made use of stratified random sampling technique with the sample size of 766 students. The researchers used structured questionnaire with 12 items titled the Effect of Domestic Violence on Academic Performance. The data were analyzed using mean score and standard deviation for the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using Z-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance. Based on the analysis, the study revealed that Domestic Violence had great effect on the students' participation in the classroom and as a result of Domestic Violence most students that were affected dropped out of school. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommended that guidance counselors should be posted to all public school, as they are in the best position to help students with such problems also teachers should refer students with such problems to the school counselors for help.*

**Keywords:** *Domestic Violence, Abuse, Academic performance, Students, Secondary School and Counselling.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain control over another intimate partner. Galey (2017) stated that Domestic violence includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse and abuse to property and domestic pets. According to him, exposure to these forms of violence has considerable potential to be perceived as life threatening by those victimized and they can be left with a sense of vulnerability, helplessness and in extreme cases horror. Dutton (2016) defines physical abuse as any behavior that involves the intentional use of force against the body of another person that poses physical injury, harm or pain. These includes, pushing, hitting, slapping, choking, the use of object on someone, twisting of body part, forcing the ingestion of an unwanted substance and use of a weapon on others.

Dutton (2014) defines sexual abuse as any unwanted sexual intimacy forced on an individual by another. It may include oral, anal or vagina stimulation or penetration, forced

exposure to sexual explicit material or activity. Compliance may be obtained through actual or threatened physical force or through some other form of coercion. Psychological abuse may include derogatory statements or threat of being killed by another individual it may involve isolation, economic threats and emotional abuse.

Straus and Gelles (2015) stated that domestic violence is widespread and occurs among all social economic groups. In a national survey of over 6000 American families it was estimated that between 53% - 70% of male batterers also frequently abuse their children. Domestic violence is one of the most under reported crimes in the United States, and the department of justice, in 1998 estimated that there are between 960,000 - 4,000,000 domestic incidences each year. In 1994 the bureau of justice statistics estimated that about 92% of domestic violence cases involved female victims. Wopadovi (women against domestic violence) 2014, domestic violence is unfortunately increasing in our society. Many people especially the females have been injured, disabled and killed as a result of domestic violence. Wopadovi, further noted that domestic violence does not recognize social classes or educational standards.

Academic Performance is an important parameter in measuring success in students. The main goal of education is to ensure that every student has chance to excel both in school and in life. Students' performance in school depends on the students' mental and physical abilities which are influenced by other factors. The home has great influence on the child's psychological, social and economic state, this is because the home is the first training ground and the foundation for the child, whatever happens at home therefore, goes a long way in affecting the behavioral and psychological wellbeing of the child (Meltzer, 2009). The home environment is considered a powerful influence on the child. It is viewed as consequential for the child developmental outcomes such as cognitive ability, school readiness, academic achievement and emotional adjustment. The academic achievement of any child cannot be separated from the home environment in which the child grew up (fantuzzo, Tigbe and Child's 2000).

There are evidences from all parts of the world that some homes are witnessing severe domestic violence which are found to be imparting seriously on the children from such homes. Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behaviors used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner in a relationship such as marriage, dating, family or cohabitation. Domestic violence includes any behavior that intimidates, manipulates, humiliates, isolates, frightens, terrorizes, blames, hurts, injures or wounds someone. Domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion or gender. (Siemienuk, Krentz, Gish and Gill (2010) Literature has asserted that children who are victims or witnesses of domestic violence may develop physical, psychological and behavioral problems as a result of physical, verbal, emotional and other forms of violence. A good number of them may lag behind in class as well as in life due to exposure to domestic violence. The short term and long term emotional and physical aftermath of domestic violence may affect students in school attendance, academic performance, and behavioral patterns both in school and class participation. This is because domestic violence not only affects the child's performance but affects their reaction to life situations, (Rossman, 2001; Wathen, 2003; Osofsky, 2003; Lundy and Grossman, 2005; Bogat Dejonhe, Levendosky, Davidson and Von, 2006).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Although domestic violence has been recognized today as one of the most entrenched and widespread forms of violence in Nigeria and in the world at large; its influence on students' performance has not received the same level of recognition. (Tong, 2020) stated that child victims or witnesses of domestic violence may develop physical, psychological and behavioral

problems as a result of physical, verbal, psychological and other forms of violence. This can affect their participation in school activities because they can go to school when they are engulfed with fear and so won't be able to learn.

Many of them may be lagging behind in class work or even in life because of their exposure to domestic violence (Wathen, 2003). The short and long term emotional and physical effect of domestic violence can affect school attendance, students' achievement, and behavioral patterns of students in school and participation in the class room. The extent of the effect of domestic violence on students' academic performance in school is unknown. Therefore, this study will aim at identifying the effects of domestic violence on the student academic performance in Etche and Omuma Local Government Area in Rivers State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate the effect of domestic violence on the academic performance of students in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study include;

1. To determine the effect of domestic violence on the students participation in the classroom in Etche and Omuma Local Government Areas in Rivers State.
2. To determine the effect of domestic violence on students school attendance in Etche and Omuma Local Government Areas in Rivers State.
3. To determine how domestic violence leads to school dropout among Secondary School students in Etche and Omuma Local Government Areas in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated for the study;

1. How does domestic violence affect student's participation in the classroom in Etche and Omuma Local Government Areas in Rivers State?
2. How does domestic violence affect students' school attendance in Etche and Omuma LGAs in Rivers State?
3. How does domestic violence lead to school dropout among Secondary School students in Etche and Omuma LGAs in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were developed to guide the study;

1. There is no significant difference between domestic violence and students' participation in Etche and Omuma LGAs in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between domestic violence on students' school attendance in Etche and Omuma LGAs in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant difference between domestic violence on students dropout from schools in Etche and Omuma LGAs in Rivers State.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study will anchor on two theories (Psychoanalytic and Behavioral theories). Psychoanalytic theory was propounded by Sigmund Freud. Sigmund Freud was born in Austria into a Jewish family in 1856.

### **Freud's Basic Assumptions concerning human nature**

Freud assumed that all human events, such as actions, thoughts, feelings and aspirations are governed by instinctual forces or sex and aggression. He sees human beings as essentially

mechanistic, Freud regards individuals as basically irrational. He believes that individuals are motivated by irrationally uncontrollable instinctual drives, which are largely out of their sphere of conscious awareness. To Freud, man is not a master of his own destiny, man's behavior is directed by the need to gratify his basic biological needs and instincts. Freud is in support of the holistic nature of man and so portrays man's nature in terms of the Id, ego and superego. He believes that a person's unique characteristics are formed in early childhood. Therefore, there is very little optimism about the possibility of personality change in adulthood. This assumption is evidenced in his description of the phenomenon of penis and envy.

Freud theorized that boys and girls make important discoveries, boys have penis, and girls don't. Thus they react differently. Boys assume that girls are inferior to them an assumption that persists throughout later stages of development. Girls on the other hand are envious; they devalue themselves and all other women (Lamanna, 2018). This theory can explain why male partners in marriage as a sign of male dominance, perpetuate domestic violence over the women. This dominance of one spouse can directly or indirectly influence their children in various aspects of their lives. Overall boys tend to be more reactive and more aggressive than girls in disturbed families. This explains why more boys run away from home during such circumstances. They are more likely to be witnesses or participants in parental confrontations. Younger children suffer more in violent homes, this is because they wholly depend on their parents. Thus, such children develop academic as well as social problems.

Behaviorists under Watson use learning principles to change behaviors. The behavior proposition is that behavior is the product of learning. The therapy focuses on behavior change in the present and sees the individual as both the product and the producer of his environment the general goal of behavior therapy is to improve personal choice thereby creating new conditions for learning. The main aim is to eliminate maladaptive behaviors and learn more effective behavior patterns.

Operant conditioning has been used to change abnormal behaviors and used to encourage desired behaviors through rewards or punishment. Operant conditioning enhances understanding of psychological disorders particularly depression. Depressed people feel that they have less control over obtaining positive reinforcement and avoid punishment. As a consequence, they are less likely to try to change their situations which further contribute to their feelings of depression. In human beings, this depression is caused by the victims having reached the state of learned helplessness. This is witnessed by feeling of futility caused by belief that one has little or no control over events in one's life, which may make one stop trying and develop feelings of depression (Lester, 2011). Thus, behavior therapy offers various action-oriented methods to help people take steps to change what they are doing and thinking. This theory is useful to this study as it expatiates on how an abused spouse may reach a state of helplessness and no longer sees the need to change the other spouse to stop the abuse. At this stage of helplessness it can spill over to their children. The abused spouse may neglect the children and this may further translate to neglect in school work, attendance to school and even affect all other aspects of the children's life. This may lead to children dropping out of school to feed themselves and may run away from their homes as a result of an inconducive atmosphere.

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **Concept of Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence is not physical violence alone. Domestic violence is any behavior that the purpose of which is to gain power and control over a spouse, partner, girl/boyfriend or intimate

family member. Abuse is a learned behavior; it is not caused by mental problem, drugs, alcohol or any other excuse.

### **Concept of Physical Violence**

This means maltreatment is any act committed by commission or omission, which willfully puts at risks or impairs the partner's physical integrity. This may involve hitting, slapping and choking, burning, biting, kicking, using weapon. It is the use of physical force against another person in a way that ends up injuring the person or put the person at risk of being injured. Physical abuse ranges from physical restraint to murder.

**Sexual Abuse:** This means any act which violates the sexual freedom of any member of the family unit through the use of force, intimidation, coercion, blackmail, deception or any other procedure to have sex or engage in specific act such as grabbing, molesting a partner, criticizing a partner, sexual performance or withholding sex, this may include any unwanted sexual intimacy forced on individual by another. It may include oral, anal or vaginal stimulation or penetration, forced nudity, forced exposure to sexually explicit material or activity or any other unwanted sexual activity (Dutton, 1994).

### **Violence and School Participation**

The effects of witnessing violence at home vary from one child to another. According to Florida P.A (2010), children may experience a wide range of emotions, some of which may be new and therefore distressing, thus, causing students to feel insecure and afraid of the future. Unimaginable trauma is a common trait that is perceived by victims witnessing a parent being beaten, this affects the children psychologically and otherwise. Waller, Stern and Kelly (2005), noted that children aged 4-5 years react with irritability, crying, bedtime anxiety and regressive fearful behavior.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The researcher adopted the descriptive survey research design for the study. According to Mugenda and Mugenda, (2008) descriptive survey design is a method of collecting information by administering questionnaire to a sample of individual or interviewing them. The population of the study consists of all public senior secondary school students (SS1) in Etche and Omuma Local Government Areas in Rivers State. The population size is 1,280 students. The sampling technique used for the study was simple random sampling technique which 766 students were randomly selected schools from the Etche Local Government Area and Omuma Local Government Area in Rivers State. The instrument used for the study is a structured questionnaire with 12 items patterned towards modified 4points rating scale of strongly Agree (SA) - 4points, Agree (A) - 3points, Disagree (D) - 2points and strongly Disagree (SD) - 1points. The data gathered from the research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, while the null hypotheses were tested using z-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of significant.

### **RESULTS**

#### **Data Presentation**

**Research Question 1:** How does Domestic Violence affect student's school participation in Etche and Omuma Local Government Areas in Rivers State?

**Table 1: Mean Response on how Domestic Violence Affect Student School Participation in Etche and Omuma LGAs in River State.**

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES				N	x	$\bar{X}$	SD	REMARKS
1	Safe and secured name increase students in class participation	450 (1,800)	250 (750)	60 (120)	6 (6)	766	2676	3.49	0.93	Accepted
2	Violence free homes help students in class participation	460 (1,840)	255 (765)	45 (90)	6 (6)	766	2701	3.53	0.94	Accepted
3	Students from violence free homes are more stable and participate more in classroom activities	500 (2,000)	210 (630)	50 (100)	6 (6)	766	2736	3.57	0.94	Accepted
4	Students that are exposed to domestic violence participate more in the classroom activities.	6 (24)	50 (150)	210 (420)	500 (500)	766	1094	1.43	0.60	Accepted
<b>Grand Mean</b>								<b>12.02</b>		

The analysis on table1 revealed that the respondents accepted that a safe and secured home increase students class participation with 3.49 mean. The table still indicates that the respondents accepted that domestic violence free homes help in class participation with 3.53 mean. It was also observed from the table that the respondents accepted that students from violence free homes are more stable and participate more in classroom activities with 3.57 mean. Also noticed in the table is that the respondent rejected the fact that students that are exposed to domestic violence participate more in classroom activities with 1.43 mean.

**Research Question 2:** How does domestic violence affect student’s school attendance in some selected schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

**Table 2: Mean Responses of Domestic Violence Effect on Students School Attendance in some Selected Schools in Etche and Omuma LGAs**

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES				N	x	$\bar{X}$	SD	REMARKS
1	Domestic Violence helps to produce Students Schools Attendance	460 (1,840)	255 (765)	45 (90)	6 (6)	766	2701	3.53	0.94	Accepted
2	Domestic Violence help to Divert Students Attention from School Attendance	500 (2,000)	210 (670)	50 (100)	6 (6)	766	2736	3.57	0.94	Accepted
3	Students affected by domestic violence attend class occasionally.	450 (1,800)	250 (750)	60 (120)	6 (6)	766	2676	3.49	0.93	Accepted
4	Starvation as a result of domestic violence can keep students out	470 (1,880)	240 (720)	59 (118)	7 (7)	766	2725	3.56	0.94	Accepted

of school.

**Grand Mean**

**14.15**

The analysis on table 2 indicates that the respondents accepted domestic violence helps to reduce students school attendance with 3.53 mean. The table still showed that the respondents accepted domestic violence helps to divert students' attention from school attendance with 3 mean. It was also observed from the table that the respondents accepted that students affected by domestic violence attend classes occasionally, with 3.49 mean. Also revealed from the table is that the respondents accepted the point that starvation as a result of domestic violence can keep students out of school with 3.56 mean.

**Research Question 3:** How does domestic violence contributes in students drop out from school?

**Table 3: Mean Responses of Domestic Violence on Students drop out from School.**

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES				N	x	$\bar{X}$	SD	REMARKS
1	Students drop out of school at a result of unstable home	470 (1,880)	240 (720)	60 (120)	6 (6)	766	2726	3.56	0.94	Accepted
2	In-secured home can lead to school drop out	450 (1,800)	250 (750)	60 (120)	6 (6)	766	2676	3.49	0.93	Accepted
3	Students will want to provide for themselves as a result of domestic violence can drop out of school	460 (1,840)	255 (765)	44 (88)	7 (7)	766	2700	3.52	0.93	Accepted
4	Domestic violence can exposed students to early pregnancy and eventual drop from school.	490 (1960)	220 (660)	50 (100)	6 (6)	766	2726	3.56	0.94	Accepted
<b>Grand Mean</b>								<b>11.46</b>		

The analysis on table 3 showed that the respondents accepted that students drop out of school as a result of unstable home with 3.56 mean. The also revealed that the respondents accepted the point that insured homes can lead to school drop out with the mean of 3.49. Still observed from the table is that the respondents accepted the view that students will want to provide for themselves as a result of domestic violence can drop out of school with 3.52 mean. The table also indicates that the respondents accepted that domestic violence can expose students to early pregnancy and eventual drop out from school with 3.56 mean.

**Test of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on students' participation in the classroom.

There is no significant difference between domestic violence on students participation in the classroom in Etche and Omuma Local Government Area in Rivers State.

**Table 4: z-test Analysis of Significant difference between the Mean Scores of Male and Female Student on the Effect of Domestic Violence and Students' Classroom Participation in Etche and Omuma Local Government Areas.**

STATUS	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	Zcal	Zcrit	DECISION
Male Respondents	300	3.05	0.93	764	3.5	1.96	Rejected
Female Respondents	4.66						

Analysis on Table 4: Shows that the Z Cal (3.5) is greater than the 2 Git (1.96). This implies that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of male and female respondents on the Effect of Domestic Violence and students classroom participation in Etche and Omuma Local Government Area of Rivers State.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference between the mean respondents of male and female students on domestic violence and students school attendance in Etche and Omuma Local Government Areas of Rivers State.

**Table 5: Z-test Analysis of Significant difference between the Mean Scores of Male and Female Respondents of the Effect of Domestic Violence and Students School Attendance in Etche and Local Government Areas of Rivers State.**

STATUS	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	Zcal	Zcrit	DECISION
Male respondents	300	3.64	0.94	764	3.5	1.96	Rejected
Female respondents	4.66						

Analysis on Table 5 revealed that the 2 Cal (3.5) is greater than the 2 Crit (1.96). This implies that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the Effect of Domestic Violence and students school attendance in Etche and Omuma Local Government Areas of Rivers State.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference between the mean respondents of male and female students on domestic violence and school dropout in Etche and Omuma Local Government Areas in Rivers State.

**Table 6: Z-test Analysis Significant difference between the Mean Scores of Male and Female Respondents on the Domestic Violence and Students School Dropout in Etche and Omuma Local Government Areas of Rivers State.**

STATUS	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	Zcal	Zcrit	DECISION
Male respondents	300	2.87	0.93	764	3.5	1.96	Rejected
Female respondents	4.66						

Analysis on Table 6: shows that the Z Cal (3.5) is greater than the 2 Crit (1.96). This implies that there is a significant difference between the scores of male and female students on the Effect of

Domestic Violence on students' school dropout in Etche and Omuma Local Government Areas of Rivers State.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings revealed that the respondent accepted that domestic violence had great effect on students' classroom participation. It was also observed from the findings that the respondents accepted the view that a safe and secure home increases students class participation. The findings still showed that the respondents accepted that domestic violence frees homes help student in class participation. The finding indicate that respondents accepted that students from violence free homes participate in classroom activities that those from violence homes. The finding also revealed that the respondents rejected the fact that students that are exposed to domestic violence participate more in classroom activities. This is in line with work of the study reveals that the respondents accepted the point that domestic violence helps to reduce students school attendance, it was observed that the respondents accepted the fact that domestic violence helps to divert students attention. The finding also showed that the respondents accepted that students affected by domestic violence attend classes occasionally. It was also observed from the findings that the respondents accepted that starvation as a result of domestic violence can keep students out of school.

The findings showed that the respondents accepted the point that students drop out of school as a result of domestic violence. It also observed that the respondents accepted the view that insecure homes can lead to dropping out of school. The findings still indicated that the respondents accepted the students will want to provide for themselves as a result of domestic violence and as a result dropout of school. The findings also showed that the respondents accepted that domestic violence can expose students to early pregnancy and eventual dropout from school. These studies are in line with the works of Rossman, (2001) Wathen (2003); Osofsky, (2003); Lundy and Grossman, (2005); Bogat Degonghe, Levendosky, Davidson and von, (2006).

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made:

Domestic violence affects students in many ways. In most cases students lose concentration and do not participate in classroom activities, it can affect students school attendance and finally lead to students drop out from school entirely. The study deduced that if domestic violence can be reduced it will increase students' academic performance.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Based on the findings from the study, the researcher recommends that Government should establish and fund counseling centers in every public schools in Rivers State.
2. Government should employ professional counselors to help both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence in Rivers State.
3. There should be public enlightenment campaign theory the mass media on the negative effect of domestic violence on student academic performance in Rivers State.

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