



INFLUENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL IN ANAMBRA STATE

BY

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Abstract

The study investigated the influence of domestic violence on academic achievement of students in public secondary school in Ogidi Education Zone in Anambra State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 2,964 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) Students in Public Secondary Schools in Ogidi Education Zone in Anambra State. The sample of the study consisted of 296 students. Proportionate stratified random sample technique was used to draw the sample. Domestic Violence Questionnaire (DVQ) developed by Omobi (2020) was used for data collection. The Students' Scores in English language was used to measure the academic achievement. The instrument was subjected to face validation. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient values of 0.67 for physical violence 0.70 for psychological violence, were obtained. Mean, standard deviation and t-test were used for data analysis. The findings of the study revealed that physical violence and psychological violence, had negative influence on academic achievement of Students. Based on the findings, it was recommended that counsellors should be proactive in identifying students experiencing psychological distress through regular interactions assessment, and referrals from teachers and peers. This will enable them provide individualized and group counselling services that address emotional challenges, such as anxiety, low-self-esteem and stress.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Academic Achievement and Secondary School Students.

Introduction

Education plays a vital role in producing qualified human power that accelerates economic development and solves the real problems of a community. Students are expected to make out much time on their education so as to graduate with good results. Academic achievement represents the outcome that indicates the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals in instructional environments, specifically in schools, colleges and universities. Academic



achievement is a parameter in measuring students' success. Key of education is to ensure that every student has a chance to excel, both in school and in life. So academic achievement is a criterion for ascertaining the capabilities of students from which their potentials could be assimilate, retain, and communicated, (Olawatosin, 2022). The common measure of academic achievement of college students is Grade Point Average (GPA). Academic achievement simply refers to the accomplishment in the field of learning that is ultimately academic achieved through teaching, development and learning, which is obtained through academic achievement tests, (Zhou,2016). The researchers define academic achievement as the progress made towards the goal of acquiring educational knowledge and skills.

The decline in the academic achievement of students is the most challenging that faces students as well as teachers and the society. Some of these issues include challenges faced by the students in their personal life, social life, lack of financial support, unqualified teachers, poor infrastructure, Lack of motivation of teachers, overcrowded classrooms, Poor management, poor supervision, dilapidation of school infrastructure, obsolete school facilities and equipment, Improper placement of teachers and family background. The decline in academic achievement of students has lead to increase risk of school dropout, poor mental health, reduce self-concept, reduced career opportunities increased stress and depression. Decline in the academic achievement of students can perpetuate cycles of poverty and socio-economic disadvantage, making it challenging for individuals to break free from these cycles, and poor social adjustment. These can also reduce access to higher education. This can also lead to limited career opportunity.

The decline in the academic achievement of students also has societal consequences such as economic burden resulting in less skilled workforce, thereby reduced economic productivity and increased poverty. It also leads to social inequality. Academic achievement of any child cannot be separated from the home in which the child grows up. It has been noticed that most children that comes to school from home has internalize issues which could be as a result of genetics, environmental factors or social factors. Children who experience any of these factors function poorly than their peers on variety of academic and socio-emotion enrollment. Despite excessive government investment in education, most students fail to achieve good academic result due to the impact of domestic violence in the different homes. Many believe that the home is supposed to be a safe place in which to grow up, develop and thrive. After all the Child rely on those closest to him for support, compassion and guidance. But when the reverse is the case there can be severe and wide-ranging effects across the family. Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behaviour among members of a family that is used by any member in a family to control or maintain power and control over the other person. Domestic violence is a systematic violence in a relationship used to gain and maintain control and power over another person, (Sobia as cited in Katz 2016).

The researcher defined domestic violence as an abusive or coercive behaviour or actions or threats or humiliation that occurs in a domestic setting in order to influence or exhibit control over a



person within the family. This includes any behaviours that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, blame, hurt, injure or wound someone. Domestic violence not only affect those who are abused, but also has a significant effect on family members, friends, and community at large. Children who grow up witnessing domestic violence are among those seriously affected in their academic achievement. Domestic violence greatly affect young children's cognitive skills and achievement in school in the sense that children who experience domestic violence in the home are faced with trauma which affects their life and more so in their academic.

Components of domestic violence includes; physical violence which involves hitting someone with an object, slapping choking, bullying and so many others. Psychological violence involve terrorizing of someone, isolating one from the others in order to cause pain intimidating someone so as to show superiority and so many others. Emotional violence involves shaming one publicly, manipulating someone with lies, using abusive language and so many others. Sexual violence involves forcefully engaging one into sexual act, molesting someone, and so many others. While financial violence involves stealing or defrauding one's family member, withholding money for essential things.

At school, children who experience domestic violence at home are face with divided attention, instead of listening to the teacher and taking down notes, they are occupied with the thoughts of the deprivation of peaceful home, discouragement, intimidation and discrimination. Thereby making it difficult for them to concentrate in the classroom teaching and learning, lacks motivation to learn and will be less active in the classroom. Psychologically, student who always experience domestic violence in the home face anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, substance misuse, aggressive behaviour, post-traumatic stress disorder, and impaired cognitive functioning. In physical violence the consequences are mostly on the health of the student that is involved. It's ironical that the family which should be a very supportive social unit is also the arena where domestic violence is mostly experienced. In social aspect, students who experience domestic violence at home turned out to exhibit anti-social behaviours such as bullying, hyperactivity disorder, while some face peer rejection, some become school dropouts.

Negative emotions leads to low productivity which also impact negatively on students learning experiences. Domestic violence also affects the behavioural patterns and attitude of students in the school. It violets the dignity and worth of the students which obstructs development. These children who experience domestic violence in their homes might go to school when they are traumatized with their experiences at home and become too frightened to learn or to be actively engage in the day's school activities, some of them might lag behind in class as well as in life as a result of exposure to domestic violence. Students from slum areas who witness domestic violence within their homes on top of other social challenges, are exposed to the aftermath of domestic violence such nightmares, disobedience, physical health deterioration, and many others all of



found to be imparting seriously on the children from such homes, (Duvvury, 2018). This enables an understanding of how domestic violence undermines households which may negatively impinge on their academic achievement. Evidence from all parts of the world that some homes are witnessing severe domestic violence which are economic, security and quality of life as well as academic achievement of those involved while limiting the effectiveness of programs to improve the well-being and capabilities of communication across low and middle income in Nigeria factors that can lead to domestic violence includes Family upbringing, Moral value, Financial constrain, Issues of childlessness, Male-child syndrome, Cultural belief, Jealousy, Psychological disorder, Personality disorder, and so many others. Following the recent happenings where domestic violence has become a great priority in some homes, it has been noticed that children from such homes are affected in their academics. Domestic Violence affects the children negatively because the child is severely traumatized witnessing domestic violence or even when they are victims of domestic violence, this affects their mental composure in the classroom.

This particular child or student will feel depressed, lacks the ability to think rationally, lacks good decision-making and also finds it hard to manage difficult situations. Nigeria students are beaten, raped even murdered by members of their own family for a supposed transgression, most times the causes could be as a result of have not having meals ready on time to visiting family members without the permission from home. Some children even experience boiled or hot water attacks from the family members or from their madams, this sometimes lead to death of victims, (Okafor, 2020).

In the past two decades, there has been growing concern and recognition of the prevalence of domestic violence in the society because of its greater risk on the society in general. Domestic violence is widespread and occurs among all social economic groups. Children who witness or experience domestic violence grows up in an environment that is capricious, filled with tension, anxiety and also dominated by fear. Instead of growing up in an emotionally and physically safe, secure, nurturing and predictable environment, these children are forced to worry about the future because of what they are experiencing in the family. Experience of any form of violence has a significant negative impact on children's development, affecting their emotional, social and cognitive functioning and interfering in their ability to learn, (Attalla et al,2020). As mentioned earlier these form of domestic violence could be physical violence, psychological violence, emotional violence, sexual violence and financial violence.

Physical violence is the use of physical force in a way that injures the victim or puts him or her at the risk of being injured. Physical violence as any behaviour that involves the intentional use of force against the body of another person that risks physical injury, harm and or pain, (Dutton, 2016). It includes pushing, hitting, slapping, choking, using an object to hit, twisting of a body part, forcing the ingestion of an unwanted substance and use of a weapon. Physical violence is easier to recognize because it is harder to disguise and often more overt than emotional violence.



The researcher defines physical violence as a way of inflicting bodily injury on any member of the family so as to exhibit control over the particular person.

Nevertheless, an essential goal of education is to make sure that every student has a chance to stand out both in school and in life. The achievement of students in school depend on the students' mental and physical capacities which are affected by other factors. Academic achievement of any child cannot be separated from the home environment in which the child grow up. Whatever happens at home, go a long way in affecting the behaviour and rearing of the child. Therefore, exposure to domestic violence has a significant impact on students' mental health. Many studies have found strong links between poorer educational outcomes and higher levels of mental health. Because of the experience of domestic violence the students' brain repress traumatic memories as a coping mechanism, which can lead to memory repression and difficulty recalling certain events or details, (Dodaj,2023). The toxic stress changes the architecture of the students' brain. National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, children living with domestic violence are 100% emotionally abused 58% psychologically abused, 46% physically abused, 23% accidentally injured and 7% sexually abused, (NSPCC) (2016).

The effect of such physical and psychological violence on students' education cannot be undermined. It could reduce the enthusiasm to learn thereby leading to slow pace of thinking and reasoning and ultimately cause poor academic achievement. Domestic violence not only affect those who are abused, but also has a significant effect on family members, friends, and community at large. Children who grow up witnessing domestic violence are among those seriously affected by this crime. Domestic violence greatly affect young children's cognitive skills and achievement in school in the sense that children that experience domestic violence in the home are affected more academically. Frequent exposure to domestic violence in the home exposes children to numerous social and physical problems but also teaches them that domestic violence is a normal way of life. Children or students who suffer domestic violence experience emotional, mental, and social trauma that affects their growth. Children who witness or experience domestic violence grows up in an environment that is capricious, filled with tension, anxiety and also dominated by fear. Instead of growing up in an emotionally and physically safe, secure, nurturing and predictable environment, these children are forced to worry about their progress in life.

The consequences of domestic violence can be devastating and long lasting especially on children and adolescents, not only do they grow up in a negative, dangerous environment, giving them little happiness and adjustment, but they also learn the wrong way of dealing a situation. It will lead to undermine the victim's self-worth or self-esteem or self-confidence, or controls the victim's freedom which could affect their participation in the class. Studies which have researched the connection between domestic violence and academic achievement suggested that students exposed to any form of domestic violence have poorer memory capacity. The family's behaviour, attitude and approach towards the child are factors that affect the development of the child academically.



Children who are raised in a family environment in which the family shows concern, approach problems equally, prepares the study environment, make plans and believes in success, will be more successful academically. The consequences of failure, anxiety and worry that accompany students from domestic violence prone families may also deny them in imbining the spirit of hard work; which is also the hallmark of students' achievement, (Shamija et al, 2019). Domestic violence in relation to child's academic achievement, affects his reaction to life circumstances and level of achievement, (Emaimo et al 2019). The family's participation in school and cooperation with teachers contributes to students' social, emotional and behavioural development, their academic competences and their socialization. Exposure to domestic 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, (Galey,2017). Children who witness domestic violence face risk of such emotional and behavioural problems such as anxiety, depression, low school achievement, low self-esteem, disobedience, nightmares, and physical health complaints. Any act or failure on the part of a parent or caregiver which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation could be tagged domestic violence, (Emaimo et al,2019). The victims always feel guilty for provoking the abuser and are always subject to intense criticism. The victim lack financial resources, they often lack specialized skills, education and training that are necessary to find gainful employment. Many researcher have attempted to carry out studies on the influence of domestic violence on the academic achievement of students in different geographical locations in the past but most of the studies were carried out years ago. Though there seem to be paucity of empirical investigation on influence of domestic violence on academic achievement of students. Their findings must have been overlooked due to the way the society perceive family as a private affair, most children are faced with terrible maltreatment in their different homes yet they find it difficult to speak up because of what they belief as a norm in the society. Most students are faced with challenges in their personal, social, family, psychological, emotional, financial and spiritual dimension such as skipping classes, procrastination, learning difficulty, poor sleeping habits and so many others. These have significant impact on their academic achievement. This is as a result of domestic violence in the home which affect their personality and social development which the researcher has come to find out that most of the students who exhibit withdrawn behaviour, truancy, self-destructive or risky behaviour and so many others in school perform poorly in their academics and it has been noticed that most of the students are experiencing one form of domestic violence in their various homes. So therefore, there is a need to investigate more on the influence of domestic violence on students' academic achievement because more attention is needed on how the family can impact on the future life of their children in Ogidi Education Zone in Anambra State.



Statement of the Problem

Academic achievement is a critical measure of educational effectiveness and it plays a central role in determining students' future opportunities for higher education and employment. However, in Nigeria, a disturbing trend of decline in academic achievement in English Language among secondary school students continues to raise significant concern among educators, policymakers and researchers. Reports from examination bodies such as West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) showed that a substantial number of students do not meet the minimum requirements in key subjects, such as Mathematics and English Language.

The decline in academic achievement among secondary school students has far-reaching consequences that go beyond poor grades on failed examination. It affects students' personal development, reduces opportunities for higher education, increases dropout rates, limits career prospects, and hampers national development. Despite the growing body of evidence linking domestic violence to poor academic achievement, there is still a gap in local empirical students examining the specific influence of components of domestic violence on the academic achievement of secondary school in English Language. It was against this that the study investigates the influence of domestic violence on academic achievement of secondary school students in Ogidi Education Zone in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of physical violence on academic achievement of SS2 students in English Language in public secondary school in Ogidi Education Zone?
2. What is the influence of psychological violence on academic achievement of SS2 students in English Language in public secondary school in Ogidi Education Zone?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Physical violence will not significantly influence academic achievement of SS2 students in English Language in public secondary school in Ogidi Education Zone.
2. Psychological violence will not significantly influence academic achievement of SS2 students in English Language in public secondary school in Ogidi Education Zone.



Method

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 2964 senior secondary two (SS2) students in public secondary schools in Ogidi Education zone. The sample consisted of 296 students. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the sample. The instrument used for data collection was Domestic Violence Questionnaire (DVQ) developed by Omobi (2020). The instruments was divided into two clusters. Cluster one elicited information on physical violence while cluster two sought information on psychological violence. Students' scores in English language was used to measure academic achievement. The face validation of the instrument was ascertain by two experts in Guidance and Counselling and an experts in Measurement and Evaluation all from department of Educational Foundations, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbriam Campus. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient. The result gave co-efficient for physical violence and 0.70 for psychological violence. The researchers administered the instrument to the respondents with the help of three research assistants. The completed copies of the questionnaire were retrieved on the spot. Out of 290 copies of questionnaire administered, 280 were correctly filled representing 93.9% used for data analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the influence of physical violence on academic achievement of SS2 students in English Language in public secondary school in Ogidi Education Zone.

Table1: Mean Achievement Scores of SS II Students Exposed to Physical Violence and Those Not Exposed to Physical Violence

Exposure to Physical Violence	N	Mean	SD	Cohens'd	Remark
Physical Violence	56	30.00	9.78	-1.32	Strong negative effect
No Physical Violence	224	43.88	10.69		
Total	280	41.10	11.88		



The results displayed in Table 1 showed that the mean achievement score in English language for SSII students exposed to physical violence in their family was 30.00 while the mean achievement score of those not exposed to physical violence was 43.88. This indicates a mean difference of 13.88. The Cohens'd effect size of -1.32 shows that exposing students to physical violence has strong negative influence on their academic achievement in English language.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of psychological violence on academic achievement of SS2 students in English Language in public secondary school in Ogidi Education Zone.

Table 2: Mean Achievement Scores of SS II Students Exposed to Psychological Violence and Those Not Exposed to Psychological Violence

Exposure to Psychological Violence	N	Mean	SD	Cohens'd Effect Size	Remark
Psychological Violence	238	40.06	11.65	-0.60	Moderate negative effect
No Psychological Violence	42	47.00	11.57		
Total		280	41.10	11.88	

The results displayed in Table 2 showed that the mean achievement score in English language of SSII students exposed to psychological violence in their family was 40.06 while the mean achievement score of those not exposed to it was 47.00. This gave a mean difference of 6.94. The Cohens'd effect size of -0.60 suggests that psychological violence against SSII students has moderate negative influence on their academic achievement in English language.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: physical violence will not significantly influence academic achievement of SS2 students in English language in public secondary school in Ogidi Education zone



Table 3: t-test on Mean Achievement Scores in English Language of SSII Public Secondary Schools Exposed to Physical Violence and Those Not Exposed in their Families.

Exposure to Physical Violence	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P	Remark
Physical Violence	56	30.00	9.78	278	-5.99	0.000	Significant
No Physical Violence	224	43.88	10.69				

The t-test results displayed in Table 3 revealed that there was a significant difference in the mean achievement scores in English language of SSII students exposed to physical violence and the mean achievement score of those not exposed to physical violence, $t(278) = 5.99$, $p = 0.000$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis 2: physiological violence will not significantly influence academic achievement of SS2 students in English language in public secondary schools in Anambra state.

Table 4: t-test on Mean Achievement Scores in English Language of SSII Public Secondary Schools Exposed to Psychological Violence and Those Not Exposed in their Families.

Exposure to Psychological Violence	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P	Remark
Psychological Violence	238	40.06	11.65	278	-3.56	0.000	Significant
No Psychological Violence	42	47.00	11.57				

Table 4 displayed t-test results which showed that there was a significant difference in the mean achievement scores in English language of SSII students exposed to psychological violence and the mean achievement score of those not exposed to psychological violence, $t(278) = 3.56$, $p = 0.000$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.



Discussion

The findings of the study indicated that the mean scores of students exposed to physical violence in their family was 30.00 while the mean score of those not exposed to physical violence was 43.88. This indicates a mean difference of 13.88. The cohens'd effect size of -1.32 shows that exposing students to physical violence has strong negative influence on their academic achievement. The t-test results shows that there was a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students exposed to physical violence and the mean achievement score of those not exposed to physical violence, $t(278) = 5.99$, $p = 0.000$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The findings of the study showed that the mean achievement scores of students exposed to psychological violence in their family was 40.06 while the mean achievement score of those not exposed to it was 47.00. This gave a mean difference of 6.94. The Cohens'd effect size of -0.60. This suggests that psychological violence against students has moderate negative influence on their academic achievement. The t-test results indicates that there was a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students exposed to psychological violence and the mean achievement score of those not exposed to psychological violence, $t(278) = 3.56$, $p = 0.000$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Conclusion

The study explored the influence of domestic violence on academic achievement of Secondary School Students in Ogidi Education Zone. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that domestic violence had negative influence on academic achievement of SS 2 students in English Language in public secondary school in Ogidi Education Zone in Anambra State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. School administrators should develop, implement, and strictly enforce comprehensive anti-violence policies that prohibit all forms of physical abuse within the school setting. These policies should be clearly communicated to both staff and students and be accompanied by well-defined disciplinary measure for violations.
2. Counsellors should be proactive in identifying students experiencing psychological distress through regular interactions, assessments, and referrals from researchers and address emotional challenges such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and stress.



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