

Domestic Violence and Its Effects on Academics Performance of Secondary School Students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *Domestic violence is a pervasive societal challenge with significant effects for student development and academic performance. This study investigates the impact of domestic violence on the academic performance of secondary school students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study specifically examines the prevalence and forms of domestic violence, its effects on academic outcomes, and the broader influence on students' educational achievements, while offering actionable recommendations to address the issue. The research employs a descriptive survey design, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data from a representative sample of secondary school students, teachers, and community stakeholders. Structured questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions were the primary tools used to collect data. The sample was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique to ensure diversity and inclusivity. Statistical analyses, including descriptive and inferential statistics, were applied to interpret the findings. The study adopted behavioural theory as theoretical framework. The study reveals a high prevalence of domestic violence among secondary school students in Ikere-Ekiti, with physical, emotional, and psychological abuse being the most common forms. The findings indicate that students exposed to domestic violence often exhibit poor academic performance, including lower grades, absenteeism, and reduced classroom participation. Furthermore, the study identifies that the trauma and stress associated with domestic violence significantly impair students' cognitive abilities, concentration, and overall motivation to learn. Based on these findings, the study recommends the implementation of comprehensive support systems for affected students, including counseling services, teacher training on identifying and addressing domestic violence cases, and fostering safe school environments. It also advocates for stronger community awareness campaigns and policy interventions by the government to curb domestic violence and its adverse effects.*

Keywords: domestic, violence, academic, performance, students

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence, a significant global issue, has profound effects on various aspects of individuals' lives, particularly secondary school student. The impact of domestic violence on student's academic performance is a critical area of study, as it influences not only immediate educational outcomes but also long-term development and well-being. Domestic violence is a pervasive social issue that transcends cultural, economic, and geographical boundaries, affecting millions of individuals worldwide. In Nigeria, domestic violence remains a significant concern, with far-reaching consequences not only for the direct victims but also for students who witness or experience violence within the home (Afolabi, 2019). These students, who are often considered the silent victims of domestic violence, face a myriad of challenges that extend beyond the immediate physical or emotional trauma (Ikechukwu & Adeyemi, 2020). One critical area where the impact of domestic violence is particularly pronounced is in the academic performance of students (United Nations Children's Fund, 2022). Domestic violence refers to a pattern of abusive behaviors used by one partner in a marriage, dating, family, or cohabitation relationship to obtain or keep control over another intimate partner. In order to influence someone else, one can use physical, sexual, emotional, financial, or psychological acts or threats. This encompasses any actions that cause fear, terror, intimidation, isolation, coercion, threats, blame, harm, injure, or wound someone (Ikechukwu & Adeyemi, 2020).

Psychological abuse and forced sex are frequently present in cases of domestic violence. Domestic violence within the home is viewed as paradoxical because families are supposed to be places where people enjoy and maintain intimacy and receive greater emotional support in their relationships with those closest to them (Afolabi, 2019).. It is ironic that intimate partner violence, or IPV, is more common in this social group that is known for its strong support. In addition to other social difficulties, students from impoverished neighborhoods are exposed to the aftereffects of domestic violence, which can have a detrimental influence on their academic achievement and involvement in school. These effects include anxiety, depression, poor academic performance, low self-esteem, disobedience, nightmares, and physical health deterioration (Ikechukwu & Adeyemi, 2020).

As a result of victims' frequent failure to report, domestic violence remains a family and interpersonal secret, making it impossible to determine the exact scope and magnitude of the problem. There are typically long-lasting effects on students from domestic violence. The children may experience both short-term and long-term emotional imbalances in addition to the trauma of the violent scenes, which could negatively impact their social and interpersonal interactions as

well as their behavior and academic performance. According to a hypothesis that can be considered a continuation, these kids might grow up to be abusers. Kids who see their parents abusing each other frequently experience many of the same emotional and behavioral issues as kids who experience abuse themselves (Tony, 2002).

Academic performance is a crucial factor in determining a student's level of success. Ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive in the classroom and in life is one of education's main objectives. Students' mental and physical capacities, which are impacted by a variety of other factors, determine how well they perform in the classroom. The home is one of the main influences on students' learning. Being the child's first classroom and foundation, the home has a significant impact on their psychological, emotional, social, and economic well-being. As such, events that occur there have a significant impact on the child's behavioral and psychological development (Meltzer, 2009).

The moral and mental development of a child is greatly influenced by the home environment in which they are raised. It is thought to have an impact on developmental outcomes for students, including cognitive function, emotional stability, academic success, and preparedness for school. According to Fantuzzo, Tighe, and Childs (2000), a student's academic performance is inextricably linked to their home environment. Evidence from all over the world indicates that some homes are experiencing severe domestic violence, which is found to be having a negative impact on the students living in such homes. Numerous studies on the impact of domestic violence on students have been carried out, primarily in developed nations (Wathen, 2003; UNO, 2006; McDonald et al., 2006; Meltzer, 2009; Stanley, 2011). In contrast, there have been few studies conducted in developing nations, which may be due to insufficient data or the perception that domestic violence is a family matter best left alone, particularly in Africa (Aihie, 2009). In Nigerian secondary schools, there have been documented instances of widespread student failure or subpar performance over time (Uwiafo, 2012). Additionally, earlier research confirmed that children's academic performance is significantly impacted by the degree of intimacy between parents in a household.

Domestic violence is oftentimes accompanied by psychological abuse and in many cases by forced sex as well. Family is seen as a place where people are expected to enjoy and maintain intimacy and experience greater emotional support in their relationships with people close to them, domestic violence within the home is regarded as a paradox. It is ironic that this very supportive social unit is also the arena where Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is more often experienced. Students from slum areas, who witness violence between their parents on top of other social challenges, are

exposed to the aftermath of domestic violence such as anxiety, depression, poor academic performance, low self-esteem, disobedience, nightmares and physical health deterioration all of which may negatively impinge on their academic performance and school participation.(shaffer,&kipp,2012) Caprara (2017). Raphaela (2005) affirms such students as constantly fighting with peers, rebelling against adult instructions and authority and being unwilling to do schoolwork. In literature, it has been asserted that students who are victims or witnesses of domestic violence may develop physical, psychological, and behavioural problems as a result of physical, verbal, emotional and other forms of violence. This may affect their participation in school as they may go to school when they are too scared to learn and 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' school attendance, academic performance, and behavioural patterns both in school and class participation. This is because domestic violence in the context of the student's performance affects his/her reaction to life situations and level of performance (Sao paulo 2019;Dammeyer &Mortensen (2018); Bogat et al., 2006).

The rate at which the academic performance of student in schools in Ikere-Ekiti is declining is becoming worrisome and alarming; this decline can be seen in children examination results. This recent development of declination in the academic performance of student in schools in Ikere-Ekiti secondary has generated diverse reactions because the parents are getting worried based on the fact that the student's became credit deficient which eventually made some of the children dropout of schools. Schools are established to impart knowledge and skills to those who go through them and behind all this is the idea of enhancing good academic performances. Despite all programs and initiatives like Parent Teacher Association (PTA), educational programs like debate, quiz and counselling strategies made or devised in schools to improve students's academic performance, poor academic performance are recorded yearly.

Domestic violence is a widespread problem that affects not only the immediate victims but also children who come into contact with it. The prevalence of domestic violence in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria, raises serious concerns, especially in light of its effect on student's academic performance. There is still a significant knowledge gap about how domestic violence impacts children's educational outcomes in this area, despite growing awareness of the problem and efforts to address it. A variety of psychological and emotional problems, such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, can affect students exposed to domestic violence and make it difficult for them to focus, interact, and do well in school. The trauma brought on by seeing or experiencing violence

in the home can also cause behavioral issues, a decline in cognitive functioning, absenteeism, and other issues that can hinder their academic progress.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effects of domestic violence on the academic performance of secondary school students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. By examining the prevalence and forms of domestic violence experienced by secondary school student in Ikere-Ekiti Ekiti State, Nigeria; determining the effects of domestic violence on academic performances of secondary school student in Ikere-Ekiti; examining the influence of domestic violence on academic performances of secondary school student in Ikere-Ekiti; and providing recommendations for government and community stakeholders on strategies to mitigate the effects of domestic violence on secondary school student academic performance in Ikere-Ekiti.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Clarifications

Violence

Violence is commonly defined as the intentional use of physical force, power, or coercion to cause harm, whether physical, psychological, or emotional. The World Health Organization (WHO) describes violence as the "intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation" (WHO, 2002). This broad definition highlights that violence is not restricted to physical harm but also includes other forms of coercive or damaging behavior, which can lead to severe psychological and social consequences. A critical conceptualization of violence categorizes it into various types: physical, psychological, sexual, and structural. Physical violence is perhaps the most visible form, involving the use of force to injure or damage a person or property (Galtung, 1969). Psychological violence includes verbal abuse, intimidation, or manipulation intended to control or demean the victim. Sexual violence involves any non-consensual sexual act or attempt, often resulting in both physical and psychological trauma for the victim. Structural violence, a term popularized by Galtung (1969), describes systemic inequality embedded within social structures that perpetuate injustice and restrict individuals' access to basic rights and resources. Together, these categories provide a more comprehensive understanding of violence beyond mere physical aggression.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence refers to a pattern of behavior in which one partner seeks to gain or maintain power and control over another partner through physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological abuse. This definition underscores the abusive dynamics and the control exerted in domestic relationships. According to Tjaden and Thoennes (2000), domestic violence includes not only physical abuse but also emotional abuse, sexual coercion, and controlling behaviors. This definition highlights the broad scope of abusive actions and their impact on victims.

Academic Performance

Academic performance refers to how well students achieve educational objectives and outcomes, which are often measured through assessments such as grades, test scores, and evaluations. It encompasses a range of factors, including cognitive abilities, study habits, motivation, and engagement in the learning process (Harris, & Sass, 2007). According to Elliot and McGregor (2001), academic performance can be measured using various indicators such as academic grades, standardized test scores, and student evaluations. These measurements reflect students' knowledge, skills, and overall academic achievements. Wang and Holcombe (2010) define academic performance as a student's demonstration of learning outcomes, which include academic achievement, behavioral engagement, and emotional well-being. They emphasize that performance is influenced by a combination of internal (e.g., cognitive) and external (e.g., socio-environmental) factors.

Eccles and Roeser (2009) highlight that academic performance is not only about grades but also about students' motivation, self-regulation, and engagement in learning. They argue that performance is a multidimensional construct that includes cognitive and emotional components. Murdock and Miller (2003) discuss how academic performance is influenced by a range of external factors such as family background, socio-economic status, and school environment. They argue that academic performance should be viewed in the context of these external influences.

Empirical Review

Factors Causing Domestic Violence

In general, the factors that cause domestic violence can be classified into two categories, namely external factors and internal factors (Lamela et al., 2021; Yosep et al., 2022). External factors are factors that come from beyond the perpetrators of violence. An offender who

initially is normal or does not have aggressive behaviour and attitude may be able to commit acts of violence if faced with a situation under pressure (stress), for example, prolonged economic difficulties or infidelity or being abandoned by a partner or other events (Stanley & Boel-Studt, 2021; Yosep et al., 2022). While internal factors are factors that originate from the personality of the perpetrator himself, which causes them to be easily provoked to commit acts of violence, even though the problems they face are relatively small (Lawson & Quinn, 2013). The two factors above can have a negative effect not only on perpetrators and victims who experience acts of violence in the form of physical or verbal (Christian, 2015; Yosep, Hikmat, & Mardhiyah, 2022).

Forms of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence encompasses various forms of abuse that occur within intimate or familial relationships, including physical, emotional, economic, and sexual abuse. Physical abuse, often the most recognized form, involves any intentional use of force that causes bodily harm. According to studies, physical violence manifests in behaviors such as slapping, hitting, and pushing, often escalating over time if unchecked (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). In a study by Okunola et al. (2020) on domestic violence in Nigerian households, physical abuse was reported as the most common, primarily perpetrated by male partners. The study further highlighted how the fear of physical retaliation frequently suppresses victims' voices and limits their freedom of action within relationships.

Emotional or psychological abuse is another prevalent form of domestic violence that includes behaviors intended to control, intimidate, or degrade the victim. Unlike physical violence, emotional abuse may not leave visible scars but can severely impact a victim's mental health and well-being. Empirical research by Ali et al. (2021) showed that victims subjected to prolonged emotional abuse often experience low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. The study found that perpetrators use tactics such as humiliation, isolation, and verbal abuse to manipulate their victims, creating an environment where the victims feel powerless. This form of abuse is particularly challenging to address because it is less obvious and often minimized by both victims and society.

Economic abuse is another form of domestic violence that limits a victim's control over financial resources, often leading to long-term dependency on the abuser. A study by Oladeji and Amusan (2019) revealed that economic abuse includes preventing the victim from working, withholding access to finances, or exploiting the victim's economic resources. This control over economic means restricts the victim's ability to leave the abusive relationship and fosters a cycle of

dependency. Findings by the authors further suggest that economic abuse is often interwoven with other forms of abuse, making it a multifaceted problem that requires targeted interventions to empower victims financially.

Sexual abuse in domestic settings involves any forced or non-consensual sexual act perpetrated against the victim. Research conducted by Nwankwo and Eze (2022) in Nigeria found that sexual abuse is significantly underreported due to social stigmatization, cultural beliefs, and the perception that sexual relations in marriage are a marital duty, regardless of consent. The study indicates that marital rape and forced sexual encounters are pervasive but frequently overlooked, especially in traditional societies. The authors emphasize that societal norms and legal frameworks need to be re-evaluated to protect victims of sexual abuse within marriages, as current laws often fail to recognize or adequately address marital rape. Finally, digital or cyber abuse is a growing form of domestic violence, with perpetrators leveraging technology to monitor, control, or harass their victims. Digital abuse includes tracking a victim's location, monitoring communication, and posting or threatening to post intimate images online. In their study, Peters and Ogedegbe (2021) found that digital abuse has increased with the prevalence of smartphones and social media, adding a new layer of control and intimidation within relationships. Their findings underscore the importance of considering digital abuse within the broader framework of domestic violence, as it often acts as an extension of physical or emotional abuse, making it difficult for victims to escape the cycle of violence.

Impact of Domestic Violence on Student's Academic Performance

Research indicates that domestic violence can lead to a range of emotional and behavioral issues in children, such as anxiety, depression, and aggression. For instance, Evans, Davies, and DiLillo (2008) found that exposure to domestic violence is associated with increased behavioral problems and emotional distress, which in turn can negatively affect academic performance. Students may struggle with concentration, attendance, and participation in school activities. Miller, Sullivan, and Nolen-Hoeksema (2006) discuss how domestic violence can disrupt children's cognitive development and academic achievement. Students experiencing trauma may face difficulties with learning and memory, impacting their school performance. In their study, they observed that children from violent homes had lower academic achievement compared to their peers from non-violent environments. In Nigeria, the impact of domestic violence is compounded by socioeconomic and cultural factors. Adewale and Ojo (2012) highlight that poverty, limited access to quality education, and cultural norms in Nigeria exacerbate the effects of domestic violence on student's academic performance. These factors can create additional barriers to educational success

for student exposed to domestic violence. Ilesanmi and Akinmoladun (2020) examine how schools and communities in Ekiti State respond to the needs of students affected by domestic violence. They argue that inadequate support systems and resources in schools can hinder the academic progress of these students. Effective intervention programs and community support are crucial in mitigating the negative effects of domestic violence on academic performance. Domestic violence has a significant impact on student's academic performance, as exposure to violence in the home can disrupt cognitive development and interfere with learning. Studies have shown that students exposed to domestic violence often exhibit lower academic performance due to heightened stress and reduced focus in school settings (Fry et al., 2018). In a study conducted by Fantuzzo and Mohr (1999), students exposed to domestic violence scored lower in math and reading assessments than their peers from non-violent homes. This decrease in academic achievement is attributed to the emotional toll that domestic violence takes on a students's mental well-being, which in turn affects their ability to concentrate and perform in academic tasks.

Research indicates that students living in homes with domestic violence often exhibit higher levels of absenteeism and school disengagement. Exposure to violence can make children feel unsafe, leading them to avoid attending school or engaging in academic activities (Wathen & MacMillan, 2013). In a survey by Mrug and Windle (2010), students exposed to domestic violence were found to miss more school days, resulting in lower grades and less participation in extracurricular activities. The study suggests that consistent exposure to violence diminishes children's motivation to engage with their education, thereby increasing their risk of academic failure or school dropout.

Relationship between Domestic Violence and Students' Academic Performance

Domestic violence has been empirically shown to have a negative relationship with students' academic performance. Studies indicate that children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence are likely to experience emotional and cognitive difficulties that interfere with their learning abilities. For instance, Holt et al. (2008) found that students exposed to domestic violence often exhibit higher rates of anxiety and depression, both of which can hinder cognitive processes critical for academic tasks such as problem-solving and memory retention. The emotional strain that accompanies exposure to violence in the home has been found to detract from the focus and mental clarity required for academic success, leading to lower overall academic performance.

Moreover, exposure to domestic violence is frequently associated with increased rates of absenteeism among students. In a study conducted by Wathen and MacMillan (2013), it was shown that students living in abusive households were more likely to avoid attending school due to stress

and the fear of the situations they face at home. This lack of consistent school attendance results in gaps in learning, missed assignments, and difficulty keeping up with academic content, all of which collectively impact performance. Studies have suggested that frequent absenteeism, often correlated with exposure to domestic violence, is one of the strongest predictors of academic failure in students (Mrug & Windle, 2010). Domestic violence not only affects academic outcomes through absenteeism but also through behavior problems in school settings. Students exposed to violence at home often display aggression or disruptive behaviors in the classroom, leading to conflicts with teachers and peers. For example, Fantuzzo and Mohr (1999) noted that students exposed to domestic violence frequently exhibit externalizing behaviors, such as aggression or defiance, which lead to disciplinary actions that interfere with their academic engagement. These behavioral issues, often a reflection of the trauma from domestic violence, create additional obstacles for students in establishing positive relationships with educators and classmates, further distancing them from academic pursuits.

The academic effects of domestic violence are also mediated by students' mental health. Students exposed to violence are more prone to conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which significantly disrupts cognitive functioning and learning abilities (Buckner et al., 2004). Mental health conditions, particularly those stemming from traumatic experiences, affect students' memory, attention span, and capacity to process information effectively, which are all essential for academic performance. Longitudinal studies, such as one conducted by Graham-Bermann and Hughes (2003), have demonstrated that the psychological effects of domestic violence can persist into adolescence, affecting students' performance throughout their educational careers.

In conclusion, domestic violence impacts academic performance by creating an unstable home environment, which limits the resources and support available for students' academic pursuits. Howell et al. (2016) found that children from violent homes are less likely to have a quiet and safe place to study and are less likely to receive parental support for schoolwork. This lack of a conducive learning environment and emotional support from caregivers significantly undermines children's motivation and ability to excel academically. Together, these studies underscore the multifaceted impact of domestic violence on students' academic performance, demonstrating that violence in the home not only disrupts students' mental health and behavior but also their access to the support needed for educational success.

Theoretical Framework

This aspect of the study discusses the theory that forms the framework with which the research works is built. For the purpose of this study, the theory used is Behavioural Theory.

The theory that has been selected to study the impact of domestic violence on the academic performance of in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria is Behavioural Theory. Behavioral theory was primarily developed by John B. Watson (1913) and later expanded by B.F. Skinner (1938). This theory looks at how behaviours are learned and reinforced. It can be useful in understanding how domestic violence might affect children's behaviours in school, such as aggression, withdrawal, or lack of motivation, and how these behaviours impact academic performance. Behavioural Theory focuses on understanding how behaviours are learned and maintained through interactions with the environment. This theory, primarily associated with psychologists such as John B. Watson, B.F. Skinner, and Ivan Pavlov, emphasizes the role of environmental stimuli and responses in shaping behaviour.

By application to the study, students exposed to domestic violence may exhibit behaviors such as aggression, withdrawal, or difficulty concentrating, which can impact their academic performance. Behavioral Theory helps in understanding how these behaviors are learned and maintained in response to their traumatic environment. Domestic violence may involve inconsistent or harsh discipline practices. Students might respond to these conditions with behaviors that affect their school performance, such as decreased motivation or increased absenteeism. Behavioral Theory can be used to analyze how these patterns of reinforcement and punishment influence academic outcomes. Students who witness violence may replicate aggressive or disruptive behaviors in school. By understanding how these behaviors are learned through observation, educators and counselors can develop strategies to address and modify these behaviors to improve academic performance. Behavioral Theory supports the use of interventions designed to alter problematic behaviors. In the context of domestic violence, interventions may focus on modifying behaviors related to academic performance, such as improving concentration, reducing absenteeism, and enhancing social skills.

Behavioral Theory provides a framework for understanding how student's behaviors are shaped by their environment and experiences. In the context of domestic violence, this theory helps explain how exposure to violence can influence student's academic performance through learned behaviors and responses to their traumatic experiences. By applying principles from Behavioral

Theory, interventions can be designed to support students in overcoming the negative impacts of domestic violence and improving their academic outcomes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is evaluative and it adopted a sequential mixed research design to gather and analyse data on examining the effects of domestic violence on the academic performance of secondary school students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. A sample survey is adopted for this study to efficiently gather data from a representative group of students, teachers and other stakeholders in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the the effects of domestic violence on the academic performance of secondary school students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria while minimizing logistical challenges. It will include a description of study area/size/subjects, data collection analysis.

The study employed primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. While the secondary data will be sourced from relevant journal articles, official publications on domestic violence, magazines, textbooks, newspapers, and published and unpublished materials that addressed the subject matter. The sampling population for this study was drawn from a total population projected to be 222,400 based on the 2022 National Bureau of Statistics population projection of Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State. This study adopted purposive and random sampling technique. The purposive sampling technique is necessary to gather useful information from the students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders. The study employed the mixed method of quantitative and qualitative technique. Quantitative data from questionnaire survey was analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics including frequencies and percentage while analysis will be presented in tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of Research Objective 1 (The Frequency and Types of Domestic Violence among Students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria, experience)

Table : Awareness of Domestic Violence among Students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------|------------|----------------|
| Yes | 105 | 87.5% |
| No | 13 | 10.83% |
| I do not know | 02 | 1.67% |
| Total | 120 | 100% |

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

According to Table 1 above, the respondents were aware of Domestic Violence among Students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State as most of the respondents amounting to 105 (87.5%) of the total respondents indicated that they were aware of Domestic Violence among Students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, 13(10.83%) indicated that they were not aware. While only 02 (1.67%) know nothing about Domestic Violence among Students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State. The Table showed that many respondents were aware of Domestic Violence among Students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State. Similarly, all the key informants, during the interview session indicated that they were aware of Domestic Violence among Students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State same as those who responded through the questionnaire.

Table 2: Common types of Domestic Violence among Students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State

| Variables | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| Physical Abuse | 39 | 32.5% |
| Emotional and Psychological Abuse | 26 | 21.67% |
| Sexual Violence | 21 | 17.5% |
| Economic Abuse | 22 | 18.33% |
| Total | 120 | 100% |

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

As revealed in Table 2, physical abuse is the most common types of domestic violence among students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State as indicated by 39 respondents constituting 32.5% of the total respondents. Meanwhile, 26(21.67%) indicated emotional and psychological abuse, while 21(17.5%) respondents indicated sexual violence and 22 (18.33%) indicated economic abuse. This data reveals that physical abuse is the main types of domestic violence among students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State. This further made clarity of domestic violence among students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State.

Table 3: Factors that Contributed to Domestic Violence among Students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State

| Variables | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Cultural and Traditional Norms | 40 | 33.33% |
| Low Levels of Education | 36 | 30% |
| Poverty and Economic Stress | 21 | 17.5% |
| Alcohol and Substance Abuse | 19 | 15.83% |
| Family History of Violence | 4 | 3.33% |
| Total | 120 | 100% |

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

Table 3 presents responses on factors that contributed to domestic violence among students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State. The data showed that 40(33.33%) respondents indicated that Cultural and Traditional Norms in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State is one of the major factors that contributed to domestic violence among students in Ikere-Ekiti. 36(30%) respondents indicated low levels of education contributed domestic violence among students, 21(17.5%) respondents indicated that poverty and economic stress were the main factors that contributed to domestic violence among students, 19 (15.83%) respondents indicated that alcohol and substance abuse is the main factor contributed for domestic violence among students, while only 4 (3.33%) respondents indicated that family history of violence. This shows that there is high level of cultural practice and traditional norms in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State because of prevalent cases of domestic violence among students.

Findings of Research Objective 2 (The impact of Domestic Violence on Ikere-Ekiti Students' Academic performance)

Table 4: Impact of Domestic Violence on Ikere-Ekiti Students Academic Performance

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Decline in Academic Performance | 50 | 41.67% |
| Increased Absenteeism | 31 | 25.83% |
| Emotional and Psychological Trauma | 10 | 10% |
| Social Withdrawal and Isolation | 13 | 13% |
| Disruptions in School Attendance and Academic Progress | 16 | 16% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

As revealed in Table 4 above, the respondents agreed that the decline in academic performance is the main impact of domestic violence on Ikere-Ekiti student's academic performance as 50(41.67%) of the respondents indicated so. 31(25.83%) of the respondents indicated increased absenteeism, 10(10%) indicated that Emotional and psychological trauma, 13(13%) indicated that social withdrawal and isolation, while only 16(16%) of the total respondents indicated that disruptions in school attendance and academic progress is the main impact of domestic violence on Ikere-Ekiti student's academic achievement. Based on respondents' opinions during interview session, respondents affirmed that domestic violence has a profound impact on the academic performance of students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State. The insights from various respondents provide a detailed understanding of how the effects of violence at home reverberate through students' academic lives.

Majority of the respondents consistently highlighted that students experiencing domestic violence often struggle with academic performance. The emotional and psychological distress caused by domestic violence impairs their ability to concentrate, engage in learning, and retain information. Students subjected to physical and emotional abuse at home may find it difficult to focus on their studies, resulting in lower grades and academic underachievement. The stress and trauma they carry often lead to cognitive difficulties that manifest in poor test scores, incomplete assignments, and declining classroom participation.

In the same vein, many respondents noted that students affected by domestic violence are more likely to miss school frequently. The violence and instability in their home environment often result in absenteeism due to emotional distress, injuries, or the need to stay home and deal with family crises. Absenteeism, in turn, leads to gaps in learning, missed lessons, and difficulty catching up, which further hampers their academic success. As revealed by majority of the

respondents, they emphasized the deep emotional and psychological scars left by domestic violence. Students often experience anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and fear, which severely impact their mental health. This emotional turmoil makes it hard for them to engage fully in school activities, participate in group projects, or ask questions in class. Their confidence is eroded, which undermines their ability to perform well in academic tasks. The emotional distress from domestic violence creates an environment of insecurity, making it difficult for students to develop a positive self-image necessary for academic success.

According to another respondents in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, domestic violence victims tend to withdraw from social interactions, which significantly impacts their academic lives. The social isolation they experience makes them less likely to engage with teachers and peers, reducing their participation in collaborative learning activities. This withdrawal can prevent them from seeking help when struggling with academic content, further affecting their performance. Additionally, the stigma associated with domestic violence may make some students feel embarrassed or ashamed, pushing them further into isolation and deepening their academic struggles. A teacher who worked in one of the popular secondary school in Ikere-Ekiti pointed out that many students dealing with domestic violence experience disruptions in their education, such as being forced to change schools or drop out entirely. Domestic violence can cause students to relocate or temporarily leave school due to unsafe home environments, which interrupts their academic journey. The inconsistent attendance or breaks in education create learning gaps that are difficult to recover from, affecting their overall academic progress and long-term educational goals.

Many youth, students and local government staff observed that students exposed to domestic violence often lose motivation to succeed academically. The sense of helplessness and hopelessness resulting from abusive family dynamics can diminish their desire to set high academic goals or pursue further education. With their emotional energy consumed by survival and coping with abuse, their focus shifts away from academic achievement, leading to disengagement and low aspirations for future success. Physical violence can result in injuries that directly affect a student's ability to attend school and focus on their studies. Respondents pointed out that students suffering from physical abuse may have visible injuries or health problems that make it difficult to sit through classes, participate in sports, or complete schoolwork, further hindering their academic progress. Some respondents noted that domestic violence can have long-term effects on the cognitive development of students, especially younger ones. Continuous exposure to violence and stress can impair brain development, affecting memory, problem-solving skills, and the ability to process complex information. This cognitive impact, when compounded by a lack of support, directly leads to reduced academic achievement over time.

Finally, it can be deduced from respondents' perspectives during interview that, the implications of domestic violence on students' academic achievement in Ikere-Ekiti are severe and multifaceted. The physical, emotional, and psychological damage caused by domestic abuse creates an unstable environment that significantly interferes with students' ability to succeed in their education. The

combined effects of absenteeism, trauma, social withdrawal, and lack of motivation illustrate the urgent need for interventions to support students in domestic violence situations. Efforts to provide counseling, safe environments, and educational support services are crucial to mitigating these negative impacts and helping students regain control of their academic futures.

Findings of Research Objective 3 (The Impact of Domestic Violence on the Behavioral Patterns of Students in Ikere-Ekiti)

Table 5: The Impact of Domestic Violence on the Behavioral Patterns of Students in Ikere-Ekiti

| Response | Frequency | Percentage(%) |
|---------------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Aggressive Behaviour | 35 | 29.16% |
| Low Self-Esteem and Insecurity | 33 | 27.5% |
| Social Withdrawal and Isolation | 23 | 19.16% |
| Risky and Delinquent Behaviour | 13 | 10.83% |
| Emotional Instability and Mood Swings | 12 | 10% |
| Poor Interpersonal Relationships | 4 | 3.33% |
| Total | 120 | 100% |

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

Table 5 above reveals that the impact of domestic violence on the behavioral patterns of students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State. Thus, 35(29.16%) of the respondents indicated aggressive behaviour is the main impact of domestic violence on the behavioral patterns of students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, and 33(27.5%) indicated that it is low self-esteem and insecurity. 23(19.16%) indicated that the major impact of domestic violence on the behavioral patterns of students in Ikere-Ekiti is social withdrawal and isolation, 13(10.83%) of the respondents also indicated that it is risky and delinquent behaviour, 12(10%) agreed that it is emotional instability and mood swings is one of the major impact of domestic violence on the behavioral patterns of students in Ikere-Ekiti, while 4(3.33%) indicate that the impact of domestic violence on the behavioral patterns of students in Ikere-Ekiti is poor interpersonal relationship.

Accordingly, based on respondents' opinions during interview session, domestic violence has a profound impact on the behavioral patterns of students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State. These impacts are evident in various aspects of their social, emotional, and psychological behavior, manifesting

in ways that affect their interaction with peers, teachers, and their overall development. Majority of the respondents who are teachers, students, youth and security operatives consistently averred that students exposed to domestic violence are more likely to exhibit aggressive behavior. This may include outbursts of anger, fighting with peers, or defiance toward authority figures such as teachers. Students who witness or experience violence at home may replicate that behavior in school, as they have learned to see aggression as a way of resolving conflict or asserting control. This aggression not only affects their relationships with classmates but also disrupts the learning environment, further isolating the student socially.

Majority of these respondents also affirmed that students experiencing domestic violence tend to withdraw from social interactions. The trauma and emotional distress they face at home often lead them to isolate themselves from their peers, preferring to remain quiet and distant. This social withdrawal manifests in reduced participation in group activities, lack of engagement in classroom discussions, and avoidance of social gatherings. The fear of judgment, shame, or anxiety from their home situation can make them hesitant to form friendships or trust others, leading to feelings of loneliness and alienation. Respondents also observed that students who experience domestic violence often display low self-esteem and a sense of insecurity. They may internalize the violence they face, leading to a poor self-image and a belief that they are not worthy of respect or love. This insecurity makes it difficult for them to assert themselves or take pride in their accomplishments, which can have long-term consequences on their personal development. These students may struggle with self-expression, feel inadequate in comparison to their peers, and avoid taking on leadership roles or challenges in school.

In the same vein, some respondents who are teachers highlighted that students exposed to domestic violence may engage in risky or delinquent behavior as a coping mechanism or as a result of emotional instability. This behavior can include substance abuse, truancy, theft, or involvement in gangs. The trauma from domestic violence can lead students to seek out unhealthy outlets or peer groups that engage in delinquent activities. In some cases, the need for attention or the desire to escape from an abusive home environment can push students toward these risky behaviors, which further jeopardize their academic and social well-being. Additionally, respondents posited that emotional instability is a common behavioral pattern among students affected by domestic violence. These students often exhibit frequent mood swings, fluctuating between sadness, anger, anxiety, and irritability. The emotional toll of violence at home can leave them feeling overwhelmed, leading to unpredictable behavior in school. This instability may result in sudden outbursts in class, crying spells, or withdrawal into silence, making it difficult for teachers to effectively support and engage with them.

According to some teachers, students from homes with domestic violence developed trust issues with authority figures, including teachers, counselors, and school administrators. Due to the betrayal and fear they experience at home, they may view adults with suspicion or resist confiding in them. This lack of trust can prevent them from seeking help when they need it, further

entrenching their emotional and behavioral struggles. That their reluctance to engage with school authorities can also lead to unresolved behavioral problems and a lack of support for their emotional needs. Respondents observed that students exposed to domestic violence often have difficulty forming and maintaining healthy relationships with their peers. The dysfunctional and abusive relationships they witness at home may distort their understanding of healthy social interactions. As a result, they may either become overly dependent on friends or exhibit controlling and manipulative behaviors. In some cases, students may avoid relationships altogether, fearing rejection or harm. This difficulty in forming bonds can lead to loneliness and isolation, which further impacts their mental health and emotional well-being.

Corroborating the earlier respondents, a civil servant and security operative mentioned that students experiencing domestic violence tend to overreact to minor stressors or conflicts. Their heightened emotional sensitivity, caused by the constant tension in their home environment, makes them prone to emotional breakdowns or exaggerated reactions in school. That small disagreement with a peer, a reprimand from a teacher, or a challenging academic task can trigger intense emotional responses such as panic, anger, or sadness. These reactions may seem disproportionate but reflect the deep-seated emotional trauma that the student is carrying. Another respondents also observed that some students affected by domestic violence exhibit behaviors of fear and hyper-vigilance. These students are often on edge, constantly anticipating danger or conflict. This hyper-awareness can make them overly cautious, hesitant to take risks, and fearful of new experiences. Their fear may also manifest in avoiding certain people or places at school, or in overreacting to loud noises or sudden movements, as these can remind them of violence at home.

In some cases, respondents postulated that students exposed to prolonged domestic violence may develop emotional numbness or detachment. These students may appear emotionally flat, unresponsive, or indifferent to events around them. This detachment is a coping mechanism to shield themselves from the emotional pain they endure at home. Unfortunately, this emotional disengagement affects their ability to form meaningful relationships, participate in school activities, or experience joy and fulfillment in their academic pursuits. Based on respondents' opinions, domestic violence has a profound and multifaceted impact on the behavioral patterns of students in Ikere-Ekiti. Aggression, withdrawal, emotional instability, and risky behaviors are some of the ways students react to the trauma they face at home. These behavioral changes not only disrupt their social relationships and academic experiences but also put them at risk for long-term emotional and psychological challenges. Addressing these behavioral issues requires a comprehensive approach, including counseling, emotional support, and creating a safe, understanding environment both at home and in school.

Findings of Research Objective 4 (Recommendations for Government and Community Stakeholders on Strategies to Mitigate the Effects of Domestic Violence on Students academic performance in Ikere-Ekiti)

Table 6: Recommendations for Government and Community Stakeholders on Strategies to Mitigate the Effects of Domestic Violence on Students academic performance in Ikere-Ekiti.

| Variables | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|
| By establishing school-based counseling and support services | 52 | 63.33% |
| By creating awareness and education programs | 34 | 14.16% |
| By strengthening community support systems | 24 | 10% |
| By economic empowerment programs | 10 | 6.67% |
| Total | 120 | 100% |

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

As revealed in Table 6 above, the respondents agreed that the only way Government and Community Stakeholders on Strategies to Mitigate the Effects of Domestic Violence on Students academic performance in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State is by establishing school-based counseling and support services as 52(63.33%) of the respondents indicated so. 34(14.16%) of the respondents indicated creating awareness and education programs, 24(10%) indicated that by strengthening community support systems, while only 10(6.67%) of the total respondents indicated by economic empowerment programs in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State.

In the course of an interview with respondents, they mentioned some recommendations that the government and community stakeholders in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State can use to mitigate the effects of domestic violence on students' academic performance. These recommendations focus on addressing the root causes of domestic violence, providing support systems for affected students, and creating a safe and conducive environment for learning. Another respondent who is a school administrator emphasized the importance of having dedicated counseling services in schools to support students affected by domestic violence. Government and school authorities should provide trained school counselors who specialize in trauma-informed care to help students cope with the emotional and psychological effects of domestic violence; set up confidential reporting systems where students can safely report incidents of domestic violence and receive appropriate support; and offer peer support programs where students can connect with others who have had similar experiences, fostering a sense of community and shared understanding.

Majority of the respondents also postulated that government and community stakeholders should implement awareness campaigns to educate students, teachers, and parents about the signs and consequences of domestic violence, as well as how to seek help; conduct workshops for parents and guardians on positive parenting techniques, non-violent conflict resolution, and the harmful effects of domestic violence on children's academic and emotional well-being; develop school curriculums that include topics on human rights, gender equality, and the importance of non-violent relationships, to foster a culture of respect and equality among students.

Supporting the earlier respondent's opinion, majority of them pointed out the need for stronger legal protections and enforcement to reduce domestic violence and its impact on students. The government should strengthen existing laws on domestic violence and ensure their enforcement at the local level. This includes swift legal action against perpetrators of violence and ensuring that victims are protected; ensure that law enforcement agencies, such as the police, are trained to handle cases of domestic violence sensitively, particularly when students are involved; and collaborate with local community leaders to create a network of legal support, ensuring victims have access to legal aid and protection orders when necessary.

Majority of the respondents recommended the establishment of safe houses or emergency shelters for students and families experiencing domestic violence. The government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should: build or fund shelters where victims of domestic violence, including students, can seek temporary refuge to escape violent environments; provide these shelters with educational resources to ensure students can continue their studies in a safe and supportive environment; and ensure that the locations of these shelters remain confidential and secure, to protect victims from further abuse or retaliation. Another respondents also advocated for develop economic empowerment programs aimed at providing financial support to families, particularly women, to reduce economic dependency, which often leads to violence; that government should offer vocational training, small-scale business grants, and microfinance opportunities to women and low-income families in Ikole-Ekiti to improve their economic stability and reduce the triggers of domestic violence; and Promote youth entrepreneurship and skills development programs for students, helping them gain financial independence and reducing the cycle of violence within their homes.

In the same vein, the respondents suggested that teachers and school staff need training to identify and respond to the signs of domestic violence among students. The government and educational authorities can: provide teachers with regular training on how to recognize behavioral signs of domestic violence in students, such as sudden changes in performance, aggression, or withdrawal; equip teachers with skills to offer initial emotional support and refer affected students to the appropriate counseling services; and encourage schools to develop policies for dealing with domestic violence, ensuring that teachers and staff are prepared to take action when students are affected. To mitigate the effects of domestic violence on students' academic performance in Ikole-Ekiti, a multi-faceted approach is essential. This includes addressing the root causes of domestic

violence, providing legal protection, and creating support systems within schools and communities. The collaboration of government, community leaders, schools, and NGOs is crucial in ensuring that students affected by domestic violence are given the necessary support to thrive academically. By implementing these strategies, the government and community stakeholders can help create a safer, more supportive environment for students, ultimately improving their academic outcomes and overall well-being.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, domestic violence has significant and far-reaching effects on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. The emotional, psychological, and physical trauma caused by domestic violence negatively affects students' concentration, cognitive abilities, and overall mental well-being, leading to poor academic performance. Students exposed to domestic violence may experience absenteeism, low motivation, and social withdrawal, all of which hinder their ability to fully participate in academic activities. Furthermore, the stress and instability in their home environments can make it difficult for these students to focus on their studies, resulting in decreased academic achievement and, in some cases, school dropouts.

The cycle of violence not only disrupts their education but also limits their long-term opportunities for personal and professional development. Addressing domestic violence through supportive interventions, counseling, and awareness programs within schools and communities is essential for safeguarding the well-being and educational success of students in Ikere-Ekiti. Empowering students with the necessary support systems will create a more conducive environment for learning, fostering both academic success and personal growth. Based on the result obtained in this study it can be concluded that domestic violence has a negative influence on students' academic performance. It could also be deduced that domestic violence affects students' academic achievements of students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria.

In view of the Domestic violence and its effects on academics performance of secondary school students in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. Parents should ensure they do not portray aggressive attitudes or behaviour in their children/ward presence. This is because children learn by watching what their parents do (social learning).
2. Teachers and parents should also make sure they create time to explain certain things to their students/adolescents to better understand what is right and wrong and how to relate with people in society.
3. Psychological services should be provided in schools to provide moral support to adolescents who experience domestic violence at home.

4. Awareness campaigns of domestic violence should be put in place, to sensitise the populace on the side effect(s) of domestic violence. When people become aware of the effects of domestic violence, the need to seek psychological intervention won't be far reached.

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