

Influence of Domestic Violence on Psychological Adjustment of Adolescents in Secondary Schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State: Implications for Counselling

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Abstract: This study was an attempt to examine the influence of domestic violence on psychological adjustment of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of the study, three objectives with corresponding research questions guided the study. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a survey research design. The population for the study was 35, 949 senior secondary school students in 85 public secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State. A sample of 379 students who are victims of Domestic Violence was used for the study. The sample size was selected using purposive sampling technique. A questionnaire titled "Domestic Violence and Psychological Adjustment Questionnaire" was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was validated by experts and its reliability was established using Cronbach Alpha Method where a coefficient of 0.94 was obtained. Data collected for the study was analyzed using descriptive statistics of Means and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions and Chi-Square statistic to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that domestic violence has significant negative influence on adolescents' self-esteem and depression in Secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State. The finding also revealed that domestic violence significantly influence adolescents' aggressive behaviors negatively. The researcher concluded that, domestic violence in homes has the tenacity to negatively influence adolescents' psychological adjustment in secondary schools. The study recommended this school counsellors and minors should intensify efforts in the area of providing secondary school students who we supposed to domestic violence with ideas that can help them improve their self-esteem, skills and strategies like storytelling and sharing personal experiences that could limit depression among secondary school students. Both school authority and school counselors should intensify efforts at initiating programmes that could limit aggressive behaviours among Secondary school students who are exposed to domestic violence.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Adolescents and Psychological Adjustment and Counselling

I. INTRODUCTION

The home is the first social community in the life of any person or group of persons. It is from this that an individual attach and understands the values of culture,

assimilates the first social roles and acquires the experience of social behavior. Interactions among people in home is known to be the initial and most lasting influence that each will ever know. The experiences people have in a home forms the very basic and core belief about who they are and how they behave. When God thought of creating the human family, He intended and designed that the family should be the basic building block of society (Genesis 1:27-30). In this context, God blesses the family to have unique characteristics such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Obviously, when children grow up in families that have these characteristics, it helps them worthwhile and valuable. They learn that their feelings and needs are important and can be expressed. Families today are however characterized by incessant crises, witnessing gradual disintegration of family norms, values and cohesion. The beautiful picture of an ideal family has been threatened over time by what is termed 'domestic violence'. Domestic violence, also called family violence is the intentional and persistent abuse of anyone in the home in a way that causes pain, distress or injury (Aihie, 2009). It refers to any abusive treatment of one family member by another, thus violating the law of basic human rights. UNICEF (2014) sees domestic violence as the victimization of a person with whom the abuser has or has had an intimate, romantic, spousal relationship.

There are evidences from all parts of the world that homes are witnessing severe domestic violence which are found to be impacting seriously on the adolescents from such homes. World Health Organization (WHO) defines an adolescent as any person between ages 10-19. The home has a great influence on the adolescent's psychological, emotional, social and economic state because it is the first training ground and the foundation for the child. Whatever happens at home therefore, goes a long way in affecting the behavioural and psychological upbringing of the child (Meltzer, 2009). Hence, the home environment is considered a powerful influence on the child. It is viewed as consequential for child developmental outcomes such as psychological adjustment.

Adolescent psychological adjustment refers to the mental health of the young person, and includes conduct and school problems, peer relationships and general social and emotional functioning. It has been asserted that, adolescents who are victims of domestic violence may develop physical, psychological and behavioural problems as a result of physical, verbal, emotional and other forms of violence. Taibat and Oluwafemi (2017) stated that domestic violence has effect on the psychological upbringing of the child which could influence the behaviour of the child and make him/her to develop unusual or negative tendencies which include low self-esteem, depression, aggression, bullying, isolation, abnormal fear, anxiety, higher levels of anger disobedience, and drug abuse among others, which are the outcome of improper upbringing and guidance of the child.

The implication of this is that adolescents who witness traumatic events such as domestic violence may feel worthless and hopeless and see the world as unpredictable, hostile and threatening. Therefore, counselling intervention is needed. Shertzer and Stone (1976) defined counselling as a learning process in which individuals learn about themselves, their relationships with others and behaviours that advance their personal development. It is conducted with people who function with the normal range but have problems. Counselling is drawn from a number of theories and work in a structured environment, such as school setting, office with various individual groups and families. Important goals of counselling are facilitating behavioural changes, enhancing one's coping skills and promoting decision making.

Studies on the impact of domestic violence on adolescents' in secondary schools have found that adolescents who are exposed to domestic violence experience significant negative influences on their psychological, physiological, emotional, social, behavioral, developmental and cognitive well-being and functioning (Capenter & Stacks, 2009). This implies that exposure to domestic violence by adolescents is linked to a set of outcomes including low self-esteem, depression and aggression. A study conducted by Imhonde, Aluede and Oboite (2009) on domestic violence adolescents' psychological functioning among secondary school students in Benin Metropolis of Nigeria revealed that adolescents who experience domestic violence are reported as having low self-esteem, are more aggressive in nature and hence authoritarianism-rebellion tendencies. In a similar vein, Mathias, Mertin and Murray (2011) examined psychological functioning of children from domestic violence background. The study reported that children from domestic violence homes experience behavioural problems, adoptive behavior and aggressive responses to conflict. Another study conducted by Schiff and Mackay (2004) on urban youth disruptive behavioural difficulties reported that externalizing behavioural problems in youths are associated with exposure to domestic violence among parents. Jaffe and Ashbourne (2002) noted that grief, shame and low self-esteem are common emotions that follow children who are exposed to domestic violence.

Similarly, Campebell and Lewandowisk, (1997) remarked that witnessing domestic violence in the home has a negative effect since children may perceive the world as unsafe, adults as untrustworthy and events as unpredictable or uncontrollable. Singer, Miller, Guo, Slovak and Frierson (2008) studied 2,245 children and teenagers and found that exposure to violence in the home was significantly associated with a child's violent behaviour in the community. In a similar vein, Wolfe, Wilson and Gaffe (2003) suggested that children's exposure to domestic violence generate attitudes justifying their own use of violence. Spaccarelli, Coatsworth and Bowden (2005) supported this by stating that adolescent boys incarcerated for violent crimes who had been exposed to family violence believed more than others that acting aggressively enhances one's reputation or self-image. In relation to the above, Bauer, Herrenkohl, Lozano, Rivara, Hill and Hawkin (2006) in their study on relationship between exposure to domestic violence and bullying reported that children that are exposed to violence engage in higher level of generalized aggression.

In the light of the above, domestic violence may be widely perceived as a psychological malady that is threatening the stability and psychological adjustment of secondary school students. In view of this, Taibat and Oluwafemi (2017) recommended that, domestic violence awareness campaigns should be put in place for people to become aware of the dangers and effects domestic violence has on lives. Some examples of awareness campaigns alluded by the authors are the use of posters and pamphlets; using drama, dance or song to express an idea; radio discussions and public service announcement, video presentations: slogans printed on T-shirts and containers. Another recommendation is that Domestic Violence Act should be enacted in Nigeria to protect victims of domestic violence and provide long term measures of prevention of domestic violence. Also, the American School Counsellor Association ASCA (2009) recommended a counselor-to-student ratio of 1250. This indicates that in a school of about 500 students, there should be at least two counsellors.

In spite of these recommendations and many others, it is unfortunate to note that most Nigerian most Nigerian schools and particularly in Benue State appear not to be able to adopt such recommendations is one can hardly see even a single school counsellor not to talk of two from a school of about 500 students. The researcher also observed that no or little awareness campaign has been created regarding domestic violence particularly in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State. The implication of this is that there may be continuous cases of domestic violence in the area and adolescents' psychological adjustment problems may be on the rise. In line with the above there is the need to critically examine the influence of domestic violence on psychological adjustment of adolescents' secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State Nigeria.

Objectives

The study sought to achieve the following specific objectives

1. Determine the influence of domestic violence on self-esteem of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State
2. Ascertain the influence of domestic violence on depression of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State.
3. Find out the influence of domestic violence on aggressive behaviors of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

1. How does domestic violence influence self-esteem of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State?
2. How does domestic violence influence depression of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State!
3. How does domestic violence influence aggressive behaviors of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State?

Hypotheses

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

1. Domestic violence has no significant influence on self-esteem of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State
2. Domestic violence has no significant influence on depression of adolescents in secondary Schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State
3. Domestic violence has no significant influence on aggressive behaviors of adolescents in Secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State

II. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a survey research design and was carried out in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State. The population for the study was 35, 949 senior secondary school students in 85 public secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State (Benue State Teaching Service Board, 2018). A sample of 379 students who are victims of domestic violence was used for the study. This sample size was determined using Taro Yamane formular for sample size determination. In selecting the sample, purposive sampling technique was used. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Domestic Violence and Psychological Adjustment Questionnaire". The questionnaire was divided into two sections, A and B Section A of the questionnaire was used to diagnose adolescents from violent homes while section B was used to elicit data from the students on the influence of domestic violence on self-esteem, depression and aggressive behaviours. The questionnaire was validated by experts and its reliability was established using Cronbach Alpha Method where coefficient of 0.94 was obtained. To participate in the study, the students were given an informed consent form to complete. The informed consent form sought the students to voluntarily agree/disagree to participate in the study. Data collected for the study was analyzed using descriptive statistics of Means and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions and Chi-Square statistic to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. For the research questions, a mean of 2.50 was used as benchmark to agree and disagree to an item while for the test of hypotheses, the decision was based on p-values. Thus, p-value < α -value (0.05) was considered 'significant' (hypothesis rejected) while P-value \geq α -value (0.05) was considered 'not 'significant' (Hypothesis not rejected).

III. RESULTS

Research Question 1: How does domestic violence influence self-esteem of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the influence of domestic violence on self-esteem of adolescents

S/N	Item Statement	N	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I feel that I'm a person of worth.	379	88	88	51	152	2.29	1.21	Disagree
2	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	379	130	66	29	154	2.45	1.32	Disagree
3	I feel that I am a failure.	379	177	130	47	25	3.21	.90	Agree
4	I am able to do things as well as other people do.	379	107	67	45	160	2.31	1.27	Disagree
5	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	379	116	64	30	169	2.33	1.31	Disagree
6	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	379	67		34	116	2.47	1.10	Disagree
7	I am satisfied with myself.	379	108	51	39	181	2.22	1.30	Agree
8	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	379	300	57	13	9	3.70	.64	Agree
9	I certainly feel useless at times.	379	287	16	71	5	3.54	.83	Agree
10	At times I think I am no body.	379	300	0	0	0	3.79	.40	Agree
	Cluster Mean						2.83	1.03	Agree

Table 1 shows the mean rating scores on how domestic violence influence self-esteem of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B. Senatorial District of Benue State. As revealed on the table, the cluster mean was 2.83 which is above the benchmark of 2.50. This implies that domestic violence negatively influences self-esteem of

adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State.

Research Question 2: How does domestic violence influence depression of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the influence of domestic violence on depression of adolescents

S/N	Item Statement	N	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I am bothered about things that do not matter.	379	208	170	0	0	3.55	.49	Agree
2	I do not normally feel like eating.	379	236	106	13	24	3.46	.83	Agree
3	I do not feel happy, even when my friends try to make me happy.	379	170	132	50	27	3.17	.91	Agree
4	I feel like I am just as good as others.	379	30	194	71	84	2.44	.92	Disagree
5	I find it difficult to pay attention to what I do.	379	242	76	14	47	3.35	1.02	Agree
6	I am always unhappy.	379	91	209	49	38	2.91	.87	Agree
7	I feel too tired to do things.	379	159	139	20	61	3.04	1.05	Agree
8	I feel like something good is going to happen.	379	90	64	52	173	2.18	1.24	Disagree
9	I feel that things I do, do not work out right.	379	257	122	0	0	3.67	.46	Agree
10	I feel scared all the time.	379	159	162	55	3	3.25	.72	Agree
11	I do not usually sleep well.	379	45	260	74	0	2.92	.55	
12	I am always happy.	379	126	27	38	188	2.24	1.35	Disagree
13	I am more quiet than usual.	379	107	242	15	15	3.16	.67	Agree
14	I feel lonely as if I do not have any friend.	379	109	131	100	39	2.81	.96	Agree
15	I feel that other students do not want to be with me.	379	278	79	15	7	3.65	.64	Agree
16	I always have bad times.	379	90	23	82	184	2.05	1.22	Disagree
17	I feel like crying most times.	379	302	77	0	0	3.79	.40	Agree
18	I feel sad every day.	379	209	170	0	0	3.55	.49	Agree
19	I feel people do not like me.	379	176	104	36	63	3.03	1.10	Agree
20	I find it difficult to start any task.	379	257	122	0	0	3.67	.46	Agree
	Cluster Mean						3.09	0.82	Agree

Table 2 shows the mean rating scores on how domestic violence influence depression of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State. The cluster mean was 3.09 which is above the benchmark of 2.50. This implies that domestic violence negatively influences

depression of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State.

Research Question 3: How does domestic violence influence aggressive behaviours of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the influence of domestic violence on aggressive behaviour of adolescents

S/N	Item Statement	N	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I destroy school materials intentionally.	379	159	162	55	3	3.25	.72	Agree
2	I attack my schoolmates physically.	379	45	260	74	0	2.92	.55	Agree
3	I do not comply with my teacher's request.	379	176	104	36	63	3.03	1.10	Agree
4	I speak in the class without permission.	379	257	122	0	0	3.67	.46	Agree
5	I verbally attack my teachers.	379	159	162	55	3	3.25	.72	Agree
6	I swear in the classroom.	379	45	260	74	0	3.92	.55	Agree

7	I come to school under the influence of drugs.	379	299	61	6	13	3.70	.66	Agree
8	I argue a lot.	379	107	242	15	15	3.16	.67	Agree
9	I always forget to bring my materials to the classroom.	379	109	131	100	39	2.81	.96	Agree
10	I sneak with things that belong to others in school.	379	278	79	15	7	3.65	.64	Agree
11	My mates are afraid of me.	379	308	13	55	3	3.65	.75	Agree
12	I come to school late every day.	379	302	77	0	0	3.79	.40	Agree
13	I do not do my assignment.	379	209	170	0	0	3.55	.49	Agree
14	I do not pay attention in the classroom.	379	176	104	36	63	3.03	1.10	Agree
15	I am easily angered.	379	257	122	0	0	3.67	.46	Agree
16	I threaten people every day.	379	159	162	55	3	3.25	.72	Agree
	Cluster Mean						3.33	0.68	Agree

Table 3 shows the mean rating scores on how domestic violence influence aggressive behaviours of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State.

Hypothesis 1: Domestic violence has no significant influence on self-esteem of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State.

Table 4: Chi-Square Test on the Influence of Domestic Violence on Self-Esteem of Adolescents in Secondary Schools

	Df	χ^2_{cal}	sig	Alpha Level	Remark
Chi-Square	27	113.058	.000	.05	Significant
Sample		379			

P<.05; Df = degree of Freedom χ^2_{cal} = chi-square calculated value; Sig = P-value

Table 4 above shows the Chi-square calculated value of 113.058, degree of freedom df =27 and a sig (P-value=0.00) which is less than the alpha value (.05). Since P<.05, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that domestic violence has significant influence on self-esteem of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State.

Hypothesis 2: Domestic violence has no significant influence on depression of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State

Table 5: Chi-Square Test on the Influence of Domestic Violence on depression of Adolescents in Secondary Schools

	Df	χ^2_{cal}	sig	Alpha Level	Remark
Chi-	57	367.095	.000	.05	Significant

Square					
Sample		379			

P<.05; Df=degree of Freedom: χ^2_{cal} =chi-square calculated value: Sig-P-value

Table5 above shows the Chi-Square calculated value of 367.095, degree of freedom df=57 and a sig (P-value = 0.00) which is less than the alpha value (a = .05). Since P<0.5, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that domestic violence has significant influence on depression of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State.

Hypothesis 3: Domestic violence has no significant influence on aggressive adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State.

Table 6: Chi-Square Test on the Influence of Domestic Violence on Self-Esteem of Adolescents in Secondary Schools

	Df	χ^2_{cal}	sig	Alpha Level	Remark
Chi-Square	45	182.504	.000	.05	Significant
Sample		379			

P<.05; Df=degree of Freedom: χ^2_{cal} =chi-square calculated value: Sig-P-value

Table 6 above shows the Chi-Square calculated value of 182.504, degree of freedom df=45 and a sig (P-value = 0.00) which is less than the alpha value (a = .05). since P<0.5, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that domestic violence has significant influence on depression of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDING

The finding as presented on Table 1 revealed that domestic violence negatively influences self-esteem of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State. Some of these negative influences are that, the students are inclined to feel they are a failure; wish they could have more respect for themselves; certainly, feel useless at times, do not do things well like other people and do not have much to be proud of among others. A related test of hypothesis showed that domestic violence does significantly influence the self-esteem of adolescents. This finding corroborates with that of Jaffe and Ashhonde (2002); Imhonde, Aluede and Oboite (2009) who noted that grief, shame and low self-esteem are common emotions that follow children who are exposed to domestic violence and that self-esteem varies a great deal between adolescents who witnessed domestic violence and those who do not. As observed from the present study, adolescents who witnessed domestic violence have very low self-esteem.

The second finding of the study as presented on Table 2 revealed that, domestic violence negatively influences self-esteem of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State. Some of the ways in which domestic violence influence depression among adolescents are that, they bothered by things that usually do not have to bother, do not feel like eating; not able to feel happy even when their friends try to make them feel happy. A test of hypothesis as shown on table 5 revealed that domestic violence has significant influence on depression of adolescents in secondary schools. This finding is in line with that of Schiff and May (2004) who reported that children from background of domestic violence showed borderline to severe level of behavioural problems such as depression. Similarly, Campbell and Lewandowisk (1997) in their study remarked that witnessing domestic violence in the home has a negative effect since children, for they may perceive the world as unsafe, see adults as trustworthy and events as unpredictable. Adolescents that are depressed may be sad, anxious, empty, hopeless, worried, helpless, worthless, and restless. They may lose interest in activities that once were pleasurable experience loss of appetite, have problems concentrating, remembering details or making decisions. Depression is therefore a common problem among adolescents who are exposed to domestic violence.

Lastly, the finding of the study as presented on Table 3 revealed that domestic violence negatively influences aggressive behaviours of adolescents in secondary schools in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State. Some of the ways in which domestic violence influence aggressive behaviours of adolescents are that they destroy school materials intentionally; attack school mates verbally do not honour their teachers' request speak in the class without permission, physically attack the teachers come to school under the influence of drugs, and come to school late. This finding corroborates with that of Singer, Miller, Slovak and Frierson

(2008) who reported that children and teenagers found to exposure to violence in the home was significantly associated with a child's violent behaviour in the community in a similar vein, Wolfe. Wilson and Gaffe (2003) reported that children who are exposed to domestic violence generate attitudes justifying their own use of violence. The finding also corroborates with that of Bauer, Herrenkohl, Lazano, Rivara, Hill and Hawkin (2006) who reported that children that are exposed to violence engage in higher level of generalized aggression. Hence, adolescents who are exposed to domestic violence may become oppressive and troublesome at home and at school.

V. CONCLUSION

Findings from the study demonstrated that domestic violence in the society is a real problem that affects adolescents' psychological adjustment in secondary schools. It reveals a significant negative influence particularly on self-esteem, depression and aggressive behaviours. Domestic violence therefore negatively influences on adolescents' psychological adjustment. Domestic violence hinders ability of students to achieve psychological wellbeing as it poses threat to their self-esteem and depression and leads to aggressive behaviours in school. Adolescents' exposure to domestic violence is a major psychological adjustment problem affecting many countries of the world and Nigeria in particular.

Counselling Implications

The role of counsellors in managing or intervening in domestic violence in the society can greatly limit this problem particularly its pronounced negative influence on adolescents. Domestic violence counselling is a powerful tool for helping victims of domestic violence to adjust. Left unattended to psychologically abused adolescents may carry the negative influence of domestic violence into adulthood. It may manifest in adulthood in the form of lost of jobs, suicide, broken relationships, substance abuse, and other unhealthy behaviours. The services offered by counsellors can make a difference between despair and hope.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following commendations are made based on the findings of the study.

- i. School counsellors and administrators should intensify efforts in the area of providing secondary school students who are exposed to domestic violence with ideas that help them improve their self-esteem. This may help them let go of low self-esteem that often come with negative thoughts and imagination.
- ii. School counsellors and administrators should introduce skills and strategies that could limit the issue of depression among secondary school students who are affected domestic violence. Strategies like story telling or sharing of personal experience should

be intensified as they could help bring back the students' sense of hope, fulfillment, satisfaction, security and general wellbeing.

- iii. School counsellors and administrators should intensify efforts at Initiating programmes that could limit aggressive behaviours among secondary school students who are exposed to domestic violence. This could be in form of peace club, anger management and other social activities that can help in eliminating aggressive behaviours among secondary school adolescents.

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