THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN ABEOKUTA SOUTH, OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *This study examined the impact of domestic violence on the academic performance of school-aged children and adolescents in Abeokuta South Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria. Structured questionnaire was used in the study to elicit information from students, teachers, and parents to assess the prevalence of domestic violence and its correlation with academic performance. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts and percentages, and inferential statistics like Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and chi-square analysis, were used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that 80% to 100% of students had experienced some form of domestic violence, which led to academic challenges such as absenteeism, poor concentration, and diminished school engagement. Further, the form of domestic violence experienced were tenable to negatively impact their academic participation profile as physical abuse did not have a significant correlation with students' participation (r = -0.06, p = 0.212 > 0.05), but had a negative significant correlation with academic performance (r = -0.10, p = 0.038 < 0.05), class participation (r = -0.13, p = 0.010 < 0.05), behavioral pattern (r = -0.10, p = 0.043 < 0.05) and a highly significant correlation with discipline (r = -0.14, p = 0.005 < 0.01). Emotional abuse only established a significant correlation with students' attendance (r = -0.14, p = 0.004 < 0.01) while sexual abuse had a significant but negative correlation with academic performance (r = -0.15, p = 0.002 < 0.01) in addition to student attendance (r = -0.12, p = 0.018 < 0.05), class participation (r = -0.14, p = 0.004 < 0.01) and behavioral pattern (r = -0.15, p = 0.003 < 0.01). There was equally a correlation between property destruction (r = -0.104, p = 0.005 < 0.05) and behavioral pattern (r = -0.124, p = 0.049 < 0.05) and academic performance. The study concluded that domestic violence hinders children's educational progress and emphasizes the need for targeted interventions in schools and communities to address its adverse effects. The research contributes to a broader understanding of the relationship between domestic violence and academic outcomes in Nigeria.*

KEYWORDS: Domestic violence, Academic performance, School-aged children, Adolescents.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Domestic violence continues to be a pervasive issue that affects families worldwide, with children often bearing the brunt of its consequences. The home is a fundamental environment where a child's early development occurs, influencing their emotional, psychological, and cognitive growth. A stable home environment nurtures positive development, whereas a violent home environment can lead to long-term adverse effects, including disruptions in academic performance (Kitzmann et al., 2003; Holt et al., 2008). Children exposed to violence at home often struggle with emotional and behavioral challenges, which can interfere with their educational attainment and overall well-being. Domestic violence generally refers to abusive behaviors that occur within intimate relationships or among individuals living together. It can manifest in various forms, including physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse. This type of violence is not restricted to any particular group and can affect individuals regardless of age, gender, or socioeconomic status (World Health Organization, 2021). Research shows that children who witness or experience domestic violence are at risk of developing emotional and behavioral issues, which can severely impact their academic performance (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2013; Sim & Fulu, 2023).

Academic performance is a key measure of a student's success and development. However, exposure to domestic violence can negatively impact a child's ability to concentrate, participate in school, and engage in learning activities. Children in these situations may exhibit anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems, which are all barriers to academic achievement (McTavish et al., 2016). Recent studies, including those conducted by López-Martínez et al. (2023), have found that trauma from domestic violence can affect children's cognitive development, leading to lower academic outcomes that may persist into adulthood. In Nigeria, domestic violence remains a critical social issue. The Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey (2018) found that 31% of women aged 15-49 had experienced physical violence, with many incidents going unreported due to cultural stigma and social norms. Similarly, the Violence Against Children Survey (2014) reported that nearly 60% of children in Nigeria had experienced some form of violence by age 18. More recent data from UN Women (2021) highlights that domestic violence in Nigeria worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic, putting more children at risk of witnessing or experiencing abuse at home. Children who grow up in violent homes often face difficulties in school, including lower academic achievement, absenteeism, and disruptive behavior.

Therefore, these children may struggle to engage with their peers or teachers, leading to long-term educational setbacks (Fellmeth et al., 2013; Sim & Fulu, 2023). Despite increased awareness of domestic violence, many cases remain hidden due to societal norms that discourage reporting and intervention, particularly in countries like Nigeria (Eze et al., 2023). As a result, the true extent of domestic violence's impact on children's academic performance remains understudied, especially in rural areas. Understanding the effect of domestic violence on children's academic performance is essential for developing effective interventions. This study aims to examine how domestic violence influences the academic performance of school-aged children and adolescents in Abeokuta South Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria. By shedding light on this issue, the research hopes to contribute to ongoing efforts to address domestic violence and support children's educational success.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing awareness of the detrimental effects of domestic violence, its impact on children's academic performance remains underexplored, especially in Nigeria. Studies have shown that exposure to domestic violence can disrupt children's emotional, cognitive, and behavioral development, leading to poor academic outcomes. However, in many Nigerian communities, especially in rural areas, domestic violence continues to be seen as a private family matter, with minimal reporting or intervention. This cultural attitude, combined with inadequate social support systems, leaves children vulnerable to the long-term negative consequences of growing up in violent homes. The Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey (2018) revealed that a significant number of Nigerian children are exposed to violence in their homes, yet little is known about how this exposure specifically affects their academic performance in the context of local schools. Furthermore, societal norms that discourage the reporting of domestic violence often leave these children without the necessary emotional or academic support, thereby exacerbating the impact on their educational outcomes.

In Abeokuta South Local Government Area in Ogun State, where this study is based, there is a lack of empirical data linking domestic violence to children's academic performance. The true extent of domestic violence's impact on school-aged children remains largely unexamined. Given the critical role education plays in a child's future success, understanding how domestic violence influences academic performance is essential for developing interventions that address both the educational and emotional needs of affected children. This study intends to fill this gap by investigating the relationship between domestic violence and the academic performance of children and adolescents in Abeokuta South LGA. By doing so, it aims to provide insights that could inform policy interventions and support services for children affected by domestic violence, ensuring they have better opportunities for academic and personal success.

Broad Objective

The broad objective of this study is to investigate the effects of domestic violence on the academic performance of school-aged children and adolescents in Abeokuta South Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Specific Objectives

● To describe the socio-demographic characteristics of school-aged children and adolescents in Abeokuta South LGA, Ogun State.

● To identify the types of domestic violence experienced by children and adolescents in their households.

● To establish the relationship between domestic violence and truancy among children and adolescents in school.

● To determine the extent to which domestic violence contributes to violent behavior among children and adolescents in school.

● To assess the extent to which domestic violence impacts the academic performance of children and adolescents in school.

Research Hypotheses

H$_{01}$: There is no significant relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics of schooling children and adolescents and the effect of domestic violence on their academic performance.

H$_{02}$: There is no significant relationship between domestic violence and the academic performance of schooling children and adolescents.

Significance of the Study

Domestic violence has contributed to a growing rate of juvenile delinquency and behavioral problems among children and adolescents in society. This issue is not limited to the study area but is a national concern that requires urgent attention. The study aims to highlight domestic violence as a critical problem that affects children and adolescents, impacting their academic performance and emotional well-being.

The findings from this research will be beneficial in several ways:

- Teachers will gain insights into identifying students affected by domestic violence and develop better strategies to support these students in their learning environment.

- Parents will become more aware of how domestic violence affects their children's psychological and educational development, encouraging them to adopt healthier family dynamics.

- The public, particularly those who inflict violence on children, will understand the long-term consequences of their actions on adolescents' lives and academic success.

- Government and policymakers will gain valuable information that can inform interventions and policies aimed at addressing domestic violence as a factor contributing to poor academic performance in schools.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the effects of domestic violence on the academic performance of children and adolescents. It will explore the relationship between domestic violence and school outcomes, including attendance, behavior, and academic success. Geographically, the research is limited to schooling children, teachers, and parents in Abeokuta South Local Government Area, Ogun State.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ecological Theory

The ecological framework, developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), highlighted how various factors interact to influence violent behaviour within families instead of viewing violence as the result of one isolated cause. These factors include individual behaviour, family relationships, community norms, and wider societal factors. Together, these layers shape the complex dynamics of domestic violence, both globally and within specific contexts like Nigeria. Considering the individual level, factors such as personal history, mental health, and behavior patterns are key. Research shows that individuals who experienced violence during their childhood are more likely to replicate that behavior in their own relationships. In Nigeria, children who grow up in violent homes are at a higher risk of becoming violent themselves, as they often internalize the idea that violence is a normal part of resolving conflicts (Fawole et al., 2005). Additionally, personal struggles such as substance abuse and mental health issues, which are prevalent in many households experiencing economic stress, further exacerbate violent tendencies. These individuals may resort to violence as a coping mechanism for the frustrations they face (Ogunfowokan & Fajemilehin, 2012).

The relational level, made up of the dynamics within families and intimate relationships, is critical. In Nigeria, the traditional gender roles that dominate societal expectations play a significant role in how domestic violence manifests. Men, who are often expected to be the authoritative figure in the household, may resort to violence when they feel their authority is being challenged. This is particularly true in situations where economic pressures, such as unemployment or financial strain, create tension within the family. Violence, in this case, becomes a way to exert control or reassert dominance in the face of perceived failure (Alokan, 2013). The financial stress in many Nigerian households can also increase the likelihood of conflict, as arguments about money and responsibility often escalate into physical or emotional abuse (Fawole et al., 2005), while the community level, which is the social norms and support structures available in the broader environment, can either mitigate or exacerbate domestic violence. In many Nigerian communities, domestic violence is viewed as a private matter, one that should be dealt with within the home rather than brought to public attention. This cultural attitude often prevents victims from seeking help and reinforces the cycle of violence. Additionally, many communities lack the resources to effectively support victims of domestic violence. The absence of shelters, counseling services, or legal advocacy makes it difficult for those affected by domestic violence to escape abusive situations or hold their abusers accountable (Fawole, Aderonmu & Fawole, 2005). International research echoes these concerns, showing that when communities lack proper interventions, domestic violence rates tend to be higher. Furthermore, the societal level involves the broader structural factors that contribute to domestic violence, such as economic conditions, cultural values, and the legal system. In Nigeria, societal norms that uphold patriarchy and gender inequality provide a foundation for domestic violence. Men are often expected to control household decisions and wield authority over women, which can lead to abusive behaviors when those expectations are not met (Ezeokana, Obi-Nwosu, & Okoye, 2023). Legal protections for women and children in Nigeria are often weak or poorly enforced, allowing many cases of domestic violence to go unreported or unpunished. Economic instability also contributes to higher rates of domestic violence, as financial insecurity increases stress and tension within families, leading to a greater likelihood of conflict and abuse (Ogunfowokan & Fajemilehin, 2012).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents an overview of the methods used in the study and the detailed framework for the research. It focuses on the study area, study population, sampling procedure and techniques, the instruments and the methods used to analyze the collected data.

Research Design

The study utilized the quantitative research design to gain insight into the effect of domestic violence on the academic performance of schooling children and adolescents in Abeokuta South LGA, Nigeria. Specifically, a descriptive-correlational design was used. This design allowed for the description of the prevalence and forms of domestic violence experienced by the students and the examination of the relationship between exposure to domestic violence and academic performance.

Population of the Study

The population for this study comprised 410 respondents which were secondary school children from both public and private secondary schools irrespective of their gender, selected teachers in each school and parents within the community in Abeokuta South Local Government Area.

Sampling Size

Using Araoye, 2004 sample size formula:

$$N = \frac{Z^2 \, P \, (Q)}{D^2}$$

where N = total population

Z = confidence level (95%, value = 1.96)

Q = 1-p

P = prevalence (60%, value = 0.6 According to UNICEF)

D = Marginal error tolerance (0.05)

$$N = \frac{1.96^2 \, [0.6(1\text{-}0.6)]}{0.05^2}$$

$$N = \frac{3.842(0.6) \, (0.4)}{0.0025}$$

$$N = \frac{0.921984}{0.0025}$$

$$N = 368.79$$

From the formula, the expected sample size is 369; however, to give room for generalization and unanswered questions, 10% (37) from the total population was added to give a sample size of 406 which was rounded up to 410 for ease of administration and analysis.

Sampling Technique

Multi-stage sampling technique was used in selecting respondents for the study.

Stage 1 involved random sampling of 15% of the 15 wards in ASLGA to give 2 wards. The selected wards are:

i.   Erunbe/Oke Ijeun

ii.   Ijaye/Idi Aba

Stage 2 involved random selection of two secondary schools in each ward. The selected secondary schools are:

1.   Erunbe/Oke Ijeun

i.   Nawar Ud Deen Senior High School, Oke Jeun, Abeokuta.

ii.   Rev. Kuti Memorial Grammar School, Oke Ijeun, Abeokuta.

2.   Idi-Aba:

i.   Abeokuta Grammar School, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta.

ii.   Elyon College and Leadership Academy, Kemta Ajebo Estate, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta.

Stage 3:

S/N	NAME OF SELECTED SCHOOLS	SAMPLE SIZE
1.	Nawar Ud Deen Senior High School, Oke Jeun, Abeokuta.	110
2.	Rev. Kuti Memorial Grammar School, Oke Ijeun, Abeokuta.	140
3.	Abeokuta Grammar School, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta	120
4.	Elyon College and Leadership Academy, Kemta Ajebo Estate, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta.	40
	TOTAL	410

Research Instruments

The primary data for this study were collected using a structured questionnaire that was adapted from the Child Exposure to Domestic Violence (CEDV) scale to better suit the context of domestic violence in Abeokuta South LGA, Ogun State, Nigeria. The decision to adopt the CEDV scale was based on its well-established validity in assessing children's exposure to domestic violence, while also recognizing the need to incorporate context-specific questions relevant to the Nigerian setting. The questionnaire was divided into five sections, combining both standardized and customized elements to comprehensively assess domestic violence and its impact on children's academic performance:

Section A: This captured the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, including their age, family structure, and other background information. These questions were tailored to reflect the unique demographic features of the population being studied.

Section B: Questions in this section assessed the respondents' knowledge of domestic violence, drawing on key items from the CEDV scale while adding context-specific questions to gauge cultural and regional understanding of domestic violence.

Section C: This section explored the occurrence of domestic violence in the respondents' homes. It incorporated questions from the CEDV scale that measure exposure to violent behaviors within the household, along with custom questions designed to capture the frequency and severity of domestic violence in the local context.

Section D: This section focused on the forms of domestic violence experienced by the respondents, including physical, emotional, psychological, and economic abuse. It combined questions from the CEDV scale with additional items tailored to capture culturally specific forms of abuse prevalent in the study area.

Section E: The final section examined how domestic violence affects respondents' academic lives, with a particular focus on truancy, concentration, and violent behavior at school. This section included both adapted CEDV items and custom questions designed to measure the specific educational outcomes relevant to this study.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

To ensure the validity of the adapted questionnaire, both face validity and content validity were employed. The original draft of the questionnaire, adapted from the Child Exposure to Domestic Violence (CEDV) scale, was reviewed by experts in the field where faculty members in the department provided feedback on the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the questions. However, to ensure the reliability of the adapted research instrument, a pilot study was conducted using a sample of 25 respondents in order to assess the consistency and internal reliability of the various sub-scales used in the questionnaire. The overall reliability of the instrument was 0.821 evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha.

Method of Data Collection

Data for this study were collected using structured questionnaires; they were administered to students, teachers, and parents in the study area. The researcher and the research assistants visited schools, homes, community centers, and public spaces to distribute the questionnaires and they provided assistance where needed to ensure accurate completion. All respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses, and ethical guidelines were strictly followed during the data collection process.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, mean, percentages, and standard deviation, were used to summarize the data. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was employed to examine the relationship between exposure to domestic violence and academic performance, while Chi-square analysis was used to assess associations between domestic violence and academic-related variables such as truancy and behavior in school.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondent Students

In the study, it was found that most respondents (65.9 %) were students aged 15-17 years and they were the most affected by the variables of the present study. The females comprised 53.7 % and the males 45.9 %. Also, 66.5 % were from nuclear families, those who had single parents were 19.8 %, while those from polygamous homes were 13.6 %. The parents/guardians of the students were majorly traders (41.7 %), civil servants (24.4 %) and entrepreneurs (15.4 %). Although there were other occupations, each constituted less than 10 %. SS2 students constituted 43.0 %, SS3 39.1 % and SS1 16.9 %. Those with 1-4 siblings formed 72.9 %; this was followed by those with 5-8 siblings which formed 23.2 % of the respondents. Those with 9-12 siblings formed 2.7 % while those with more than 13 siblings were very few and formed 1.2 % of the respondents. There were more students from the Yoruba ethnic tribe (89.3 %) than there were Igbos (4.9 %); Hausa's constituted 3.9 %. 70.2 % were Christians; then there were those of the Islam religion which formed 28.0 % and those who subscribed to the tenets of the native religions (1.7 %). Most of the students had been victims of domestic violence, with 75.3 %, confirming they had been victims, and 24.6 % were non-victims of domestic violence. Most of the respondents' reported occurrences of domestic violence were rare cases (47.8 %); then there were occasionally (37.1 %), weekly (8.3 %) or daily (6.8 %) cases. Substance abuse was not a major reason why inflictors were violent; those whose inflictors were under the influence of substance abuse were 34.1 %. This is an indicator the inflictors were aware of their actions. Considering perceived activities surrounding domestic violence, most of the respondents which formed 92.0 % saw domestic violence as involving physical, sexual, and emotional abuse; most (which formed 82.7 %) also saw shouting and constant criticizing as form of emotional violence. A significant number of the respondents (91.2 %) also decried that domestic violence had been a good family practice. The majority of the respondents (84.9 %) reported beating, kicking, pulling of hair as forms of physical violence and did not see domestic violence to maintain discipline or prove love, care, and protection. The touching of one's private body parts without giving consent was perceived as a form of sexual abuse by the majority (75.4 %) of the respondents (Figure 1).
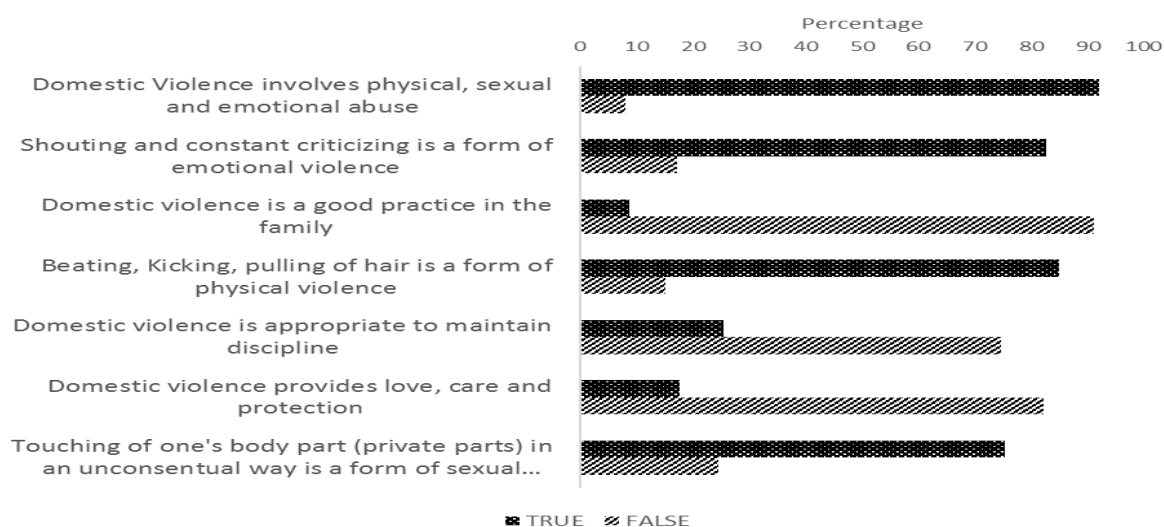

Figure 1: Perception of the students on activities surrounding domestic violence

Forms of Domestic Violence Experienced by the Students

Students who had experienced physical abuse were 50.5 % while those who had not were 49.5 % (Figure 2). Those who had not experienced emotional abuse were slightly more (57.1 %) than those who had experienced emotional abuse. Experience of sexual abuse (19.8 %) and property destruction (18.8 %) were lower than lack of experience (80.2 % and 79.3 % respectively).
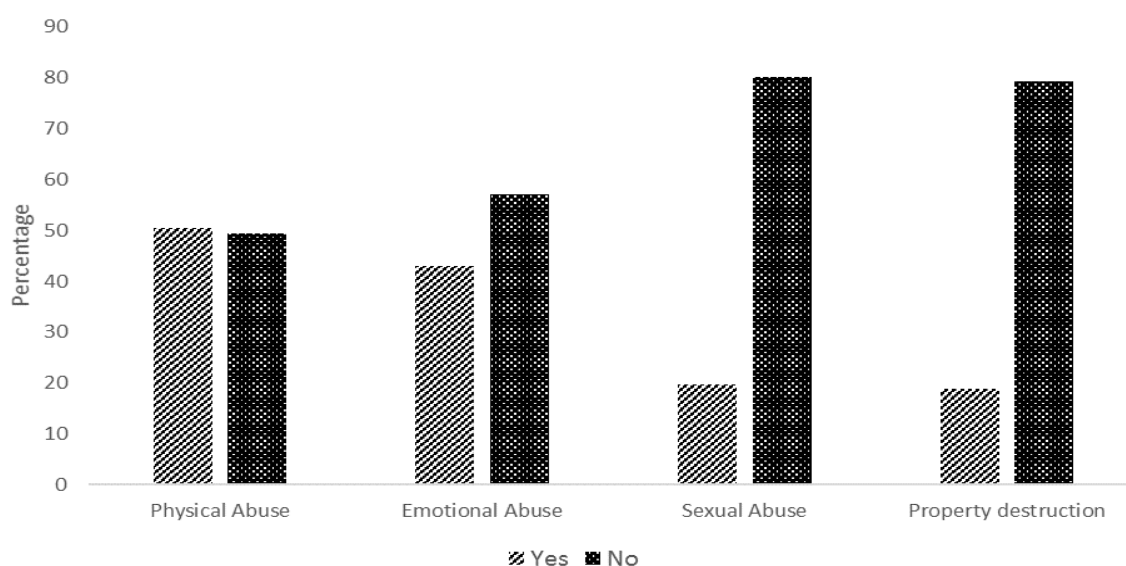

Figure 2: Forms of domestic violence experienced by the students

Effect of Domestic Violence on Academic Activities According to Their Extremities

Most of the students (56.3 %) disagreed that they found it difficult to concentrate in school because of domestic violence, 37 % of the respondents agreed, while 6.3 % were undecided. The majority (60.3 %) also disagreed that they got punished every time as an effect of domestic violence (Table 4). Students who agreed they got into fights with friends because of domestic violence were less than those who disagreed (71.4 % vs. 22.2 %), while 6.3 % were undecided. About 52.4 % of the students which formed the majority disagreed they felt reluctant to participate in school and class activities, while 39.8 % agreed, the rest were undecided. The present study established that being in school was still enjoyable despite exposure to domestic violence, as was revealed by the respondents who disagreed and strongly disagreed that they did not enjoy being in school; however, those who agreed (26.1 %) were more than those who were undecided (6.1 %). Regarding if they made friends easily, respondents who agreed and strongly agreed formed the majority (54.9 %) and were more than those who disagreed and strongly disagreed (36.8 %) and those who were undecided (8.3 %). Students who disagreed and strongly disagreed that fighting with their peers over an argument was a good exercise formed the majority (71.4 %) of the respondents; those who were undecided were 7.1 % while those who agreed and strongly agreed were 18.8 %.
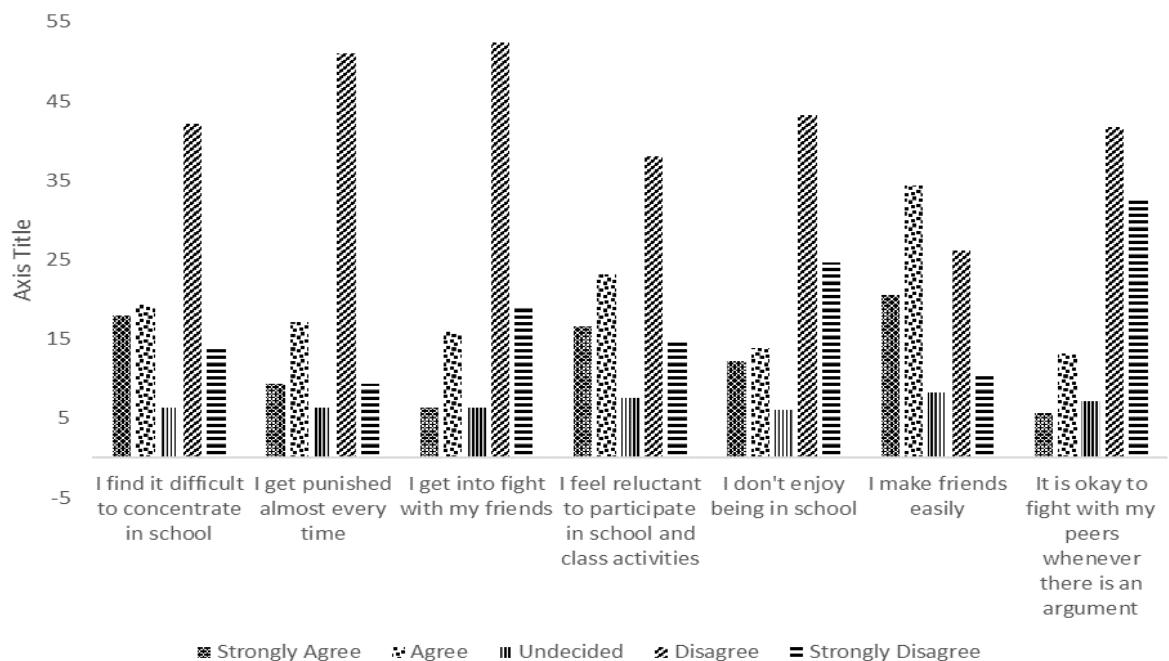
Figure 3: Effect of domestic violence on academic activities according to their extremities

Academic Performance of the Students

The class participation profile of the student as reported by their teachers is shown in Figure 1. The present study found out that the majority of the students were average in all the class participation variables measured, i.e., academic performance, attendance, class participation, discipline and behavioral pattern. More students had good academic performance, student attendance, discipline, and behavioral patterns than those that were below average; the reverse was true for class participation. Those who had poor and excellent reports were fewer; however, those that were excellent were fewer than those that were poor.
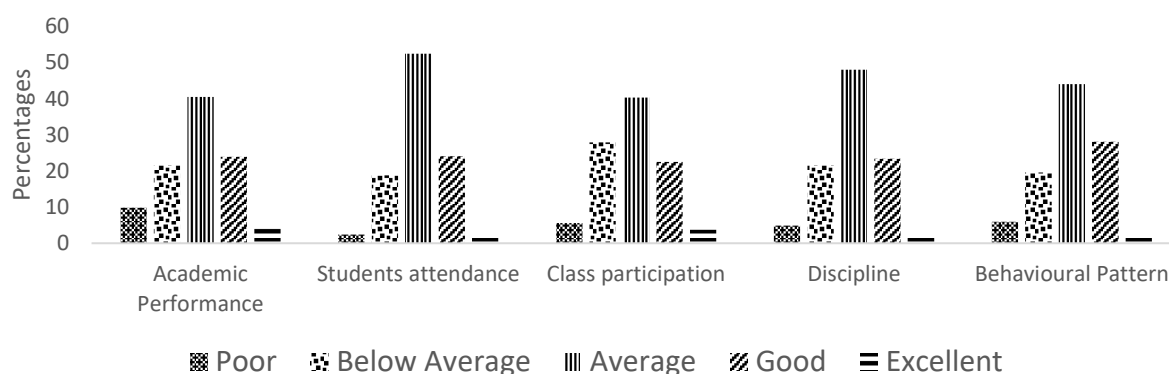

Figure 4: Academic performance of the students

Various Forms of Intimate Partner Violence Experiences by Respondent Parents

The study sought to further strengthen the premise on the exposure of the students to domestic violence based on the type and extent of domestic violence of parents in households within the study area. The types of domestic violence investigated included intimate partner violence and their perceived effects on children of the same household. The elements of intimate partner violence (IPV) explored were verbal abuse, physical violence, severe physical violence, emotional/psychological abuse and sexual abuse. Figure 16 shows the distribution of the respondents by the extent of occurrence of these various forms of IPV. From the result, 92.0 % of the respondent parents reported having used one or more forms of verbal abuse in their marriage as a way of handling disagreements. Likewise, 82.0 % of the respondent parents reported their partners being verbally abusive while handling disagreements. The use of one or more forms of physical abuse as a way of handling disagreements was reported by 52.0 % of the sampled parents; however, 48.0 % of them reported their partners using physical abuse in handling disagreements. As far as severe physical abuse was concerned, 32.0 % of household heads reported having used this form of violence in handling disagreements, while 22.0 % of household heads reported that their partners had used severe physical abuse while handling disagreements. The use of emotional or psychological abuse was also prevalent with 82.0 % of the parents sampled reporting having used one or more forms of emotional or psychological abuse in their union as a way of handling disagreements. A corresponding 84.0 % of them reported their partners having used this form of abuse in handling marital disagreements. From the sampled respondents, (30.0 %) reported having used sexual abuse as a way of handling disagreements, while correspondingly, 20.0 % of the parents reported their partners having used sexual abuse in handling disagreements. Most commonly in this study, the violent types of physical and sexual abuse were associated with verbal and emotional or psychological abuse.
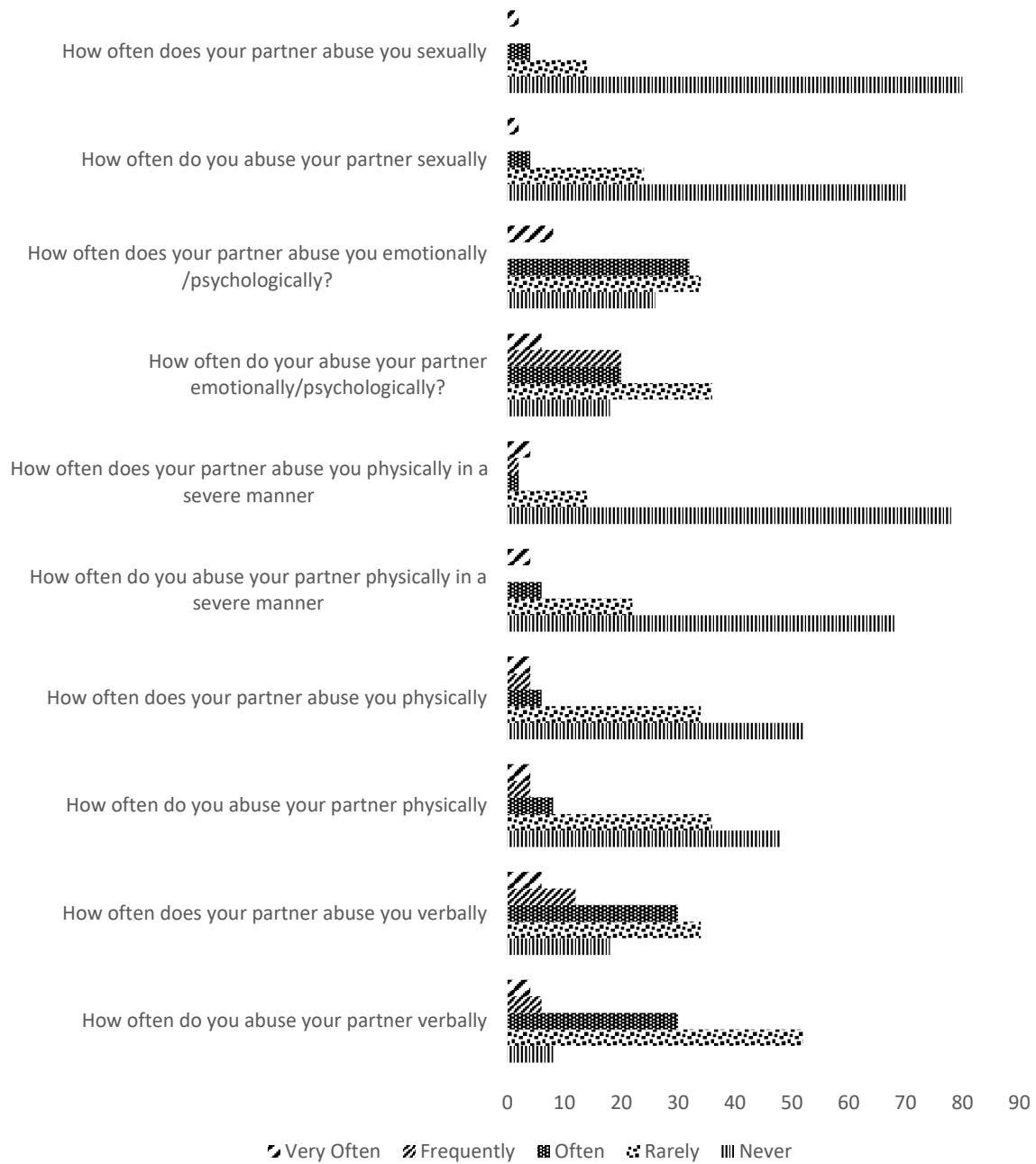
Figure 5: Occurrence of various forms of intimate partner violence

Proportion of Respondents Reporting Child Abuse by Partners and Perceiving Domestic Violence to be Influencing Children's Academic Performance and School Participation

The indirect causal effect of intimate partner violence on the class participation profile of the children was also investigated (Figure 5). By and large, from the response gotten from the parents, students' class participation profile was influenced by intimate partner violence among the sampled households. This emanated majorly from the fact that the majority of the parents (66.0 %) reported that their children were directly involved in disagreements between them and their spouse. Only 22 % of the sampled parents felt disagreements between them and their partners did not affect the class participation profile of their children. In the same manner, only about 36 % of the parents reported that violence from them and their partners did not affect their children's school attendance profile. The majority of the parent respondents, which cumulatively formed 68 %, reported that intimate partner violence did affect the behavior of their kids at school. Most of the parents, which cumulatively formed 62.0 % of the respondents, had been called to discuss the behavior of their children in school, and reported that the occurrence of cases where spouses threatened to harm their kids during dispute was dominant (64.0 %). The majority of the parents, which formed 60 %, responded that they and their partners often resorted to child neglect as a form of handling disputes at home. It is noteworthy that regarding cases where parents stated that disputes between them and their partners affected their children, such occurrences were more of rare cases than they were often, frequent or very often. Nevertheless, such cases were reported.
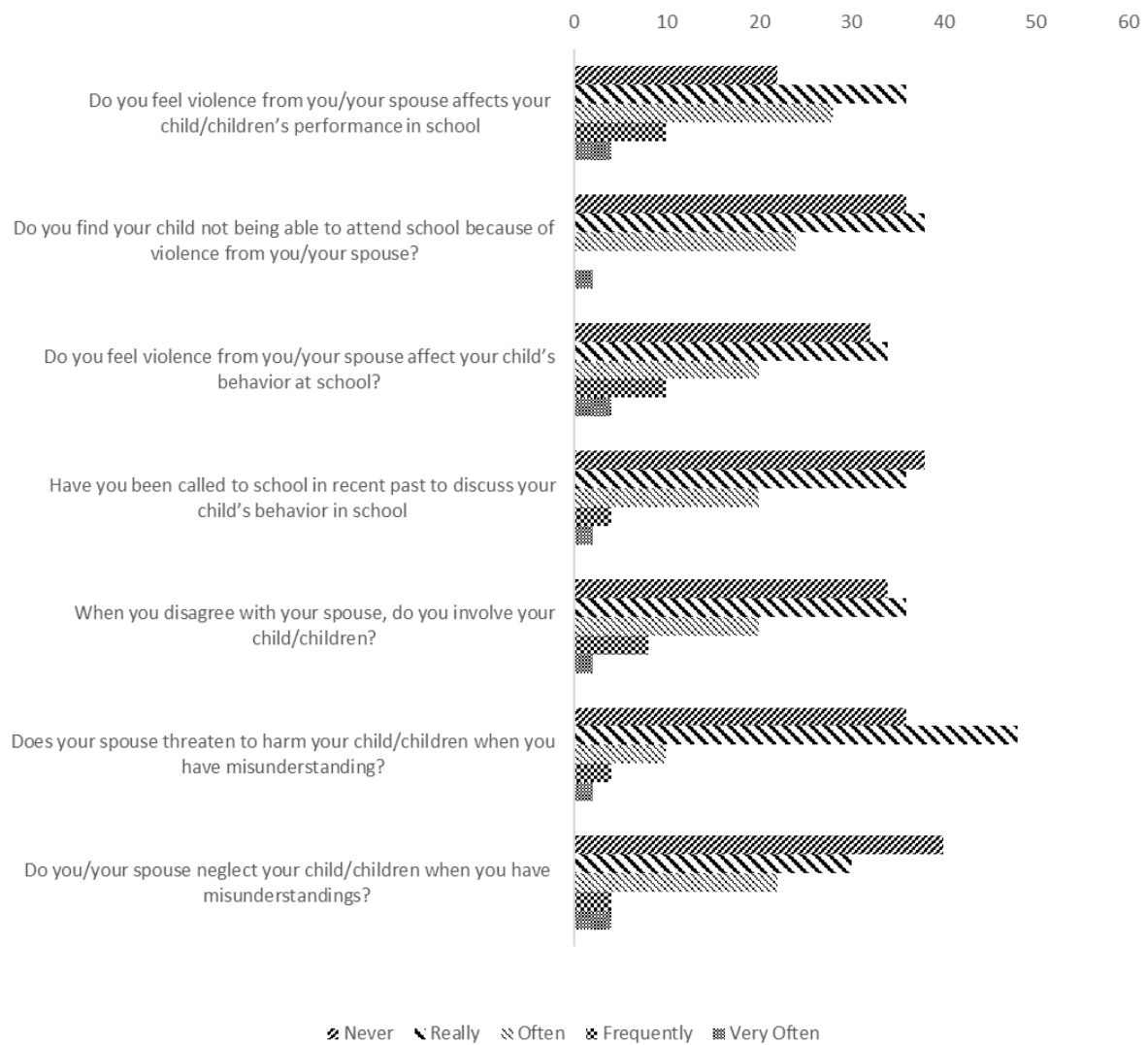
Figure 6: Proportion of respondents reporting child abuse by partners and perceiving domestic violence to be influencing children's academic performance and school participation

Perception of the Respondent Teachers on Common Signs of Domestically Abused Students

Teachers were also interviewed to establish the effect of domestic violence on the academic performance of the students. The results are presented in Figure 7 below. All of the teachers (100.0 %) claimed that they were knowledgeable about domestic violence, and all (100.0 %) also claimed that domestic violence does affect the performance of the students in school, albeit only 65.9 % of the teacher, which formed the majority, claimed they could identify students affected by domestic violence. All the teachers claimed that poor concentration of students in the classroom is a sign of domestic violence. Violence in class among peers and display of tantrums were seen by the majority of the teachers (76.7 %) as signs of domestic violence. Most of the teachers (93.3 %) also saw reduced school participation and cases of isolation where the student loves/likes doing things alone as signs of domestic violence. Signs of short attention span by students were deemed by the most teachers (86.7 %) as signs that a child is exposed to domestic violence.
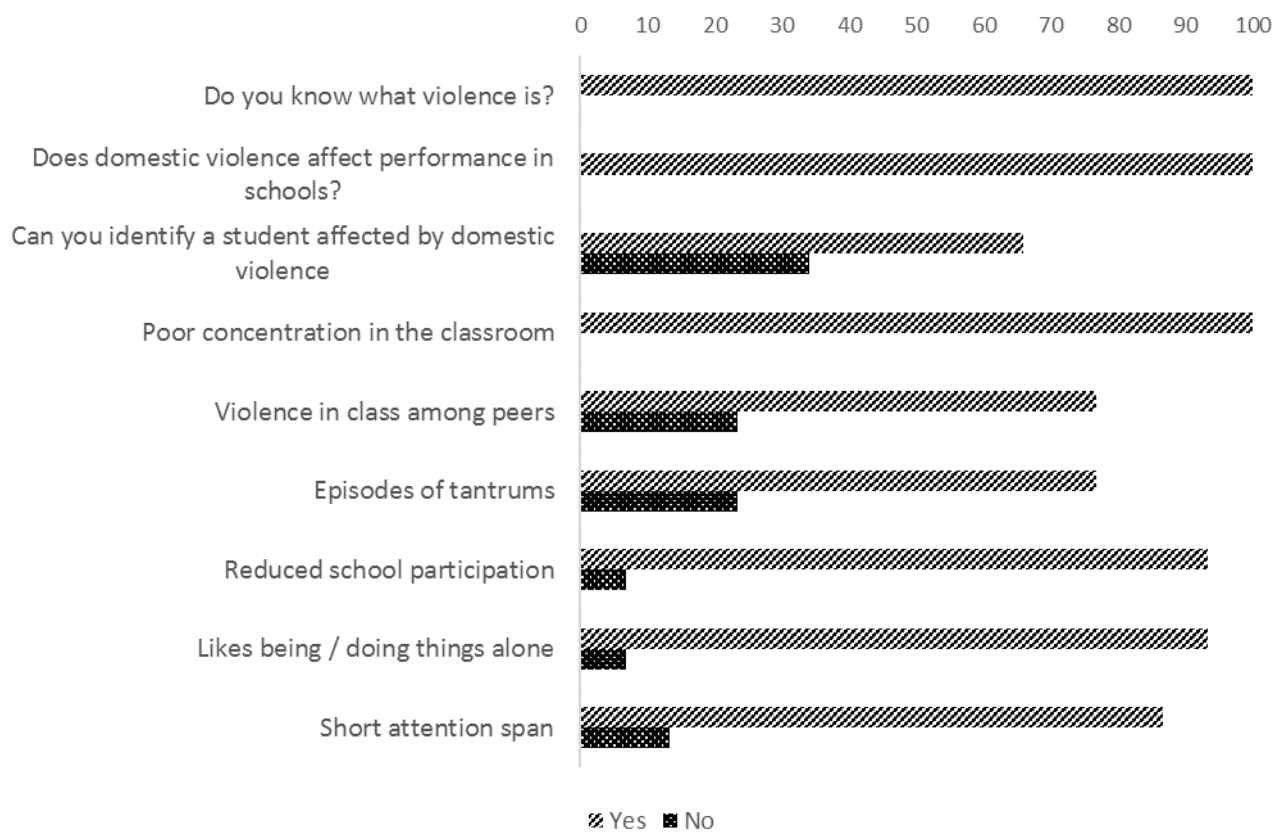

Figure 7: Perception of the respondent teachers on common signs of domestically abused students

Perception of the Respondent Teachers on Common Forms of Domestic Violence Experienced by the Students

Emotional and physical abuse were major forms of domestic violence that the teachers agreed were experienced by the students (Figure 8), although most of the teachers (60.0 %) also agreed that sexual abuse was a major form of violence experienced by the students. 56.7 % of the teachers believed the students experienced domestic violence in the form of property destruction, while 43.3 % did not agree that the students experienced violence through property destruction.
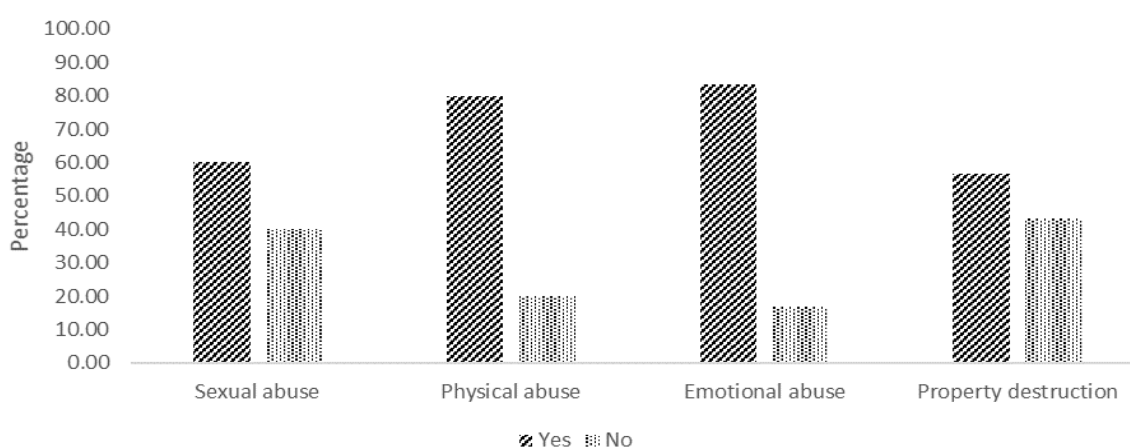

Figure 8: Perception of the respondent teachers on common forms of domestic violence experienced by the students

Perception of the Respondent Teachers on the Effect of Domestic Violence on the Students According to Their Extremities

Poor concentration in the classroom was an effect of domestic violence, as agreed by 100 % of the respondents (76.7 % strongly agreed, 23.3 % agreed) (Figure 9). The majority (80.0 %) of the teachers also agreed that frequent tantrums of the students was an after effect of domestic violence. The present study also established that violence in school and less school participation were effects of domestic violence, as was revealed by the respondents who agreed and strongly agreed, which were 76.7 % and 96.6 % respectively. Teachers who agreed that dodging of school activities was an effect of domestic violence (73.3 %) were more than those who were indecisive (13.3 %) and those who disagreed (3.3 %). On if children who were exposed to domestic violence were likely to become perpetrators as adults, teachers who agreed and strongly agreed were 63.3 %, those who were undecided were 26.7 %, while those who disagreed and strongly disagreed were 10 %. The teachers also agreed that bullying among friends (73.3 %) and poor academic grades (90.5 %) were effects caused as a result of domestic violence. On lateness to school, 30 % of the respondents were undecided, while 66.7 %, which formed the majority, saw this as an after-effect of domestic violence.
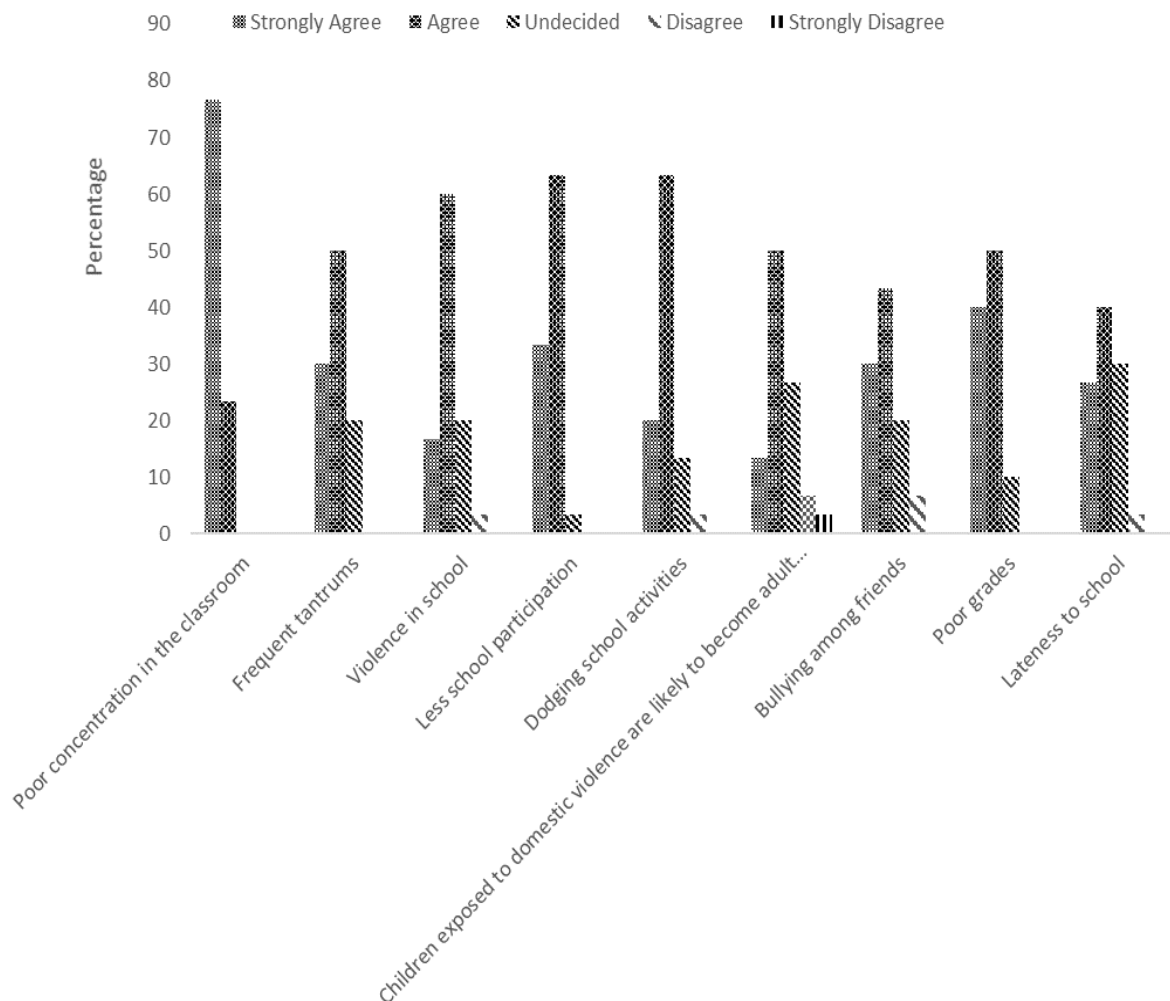
Figure 9: Perception of the respondent teachers on the effect of domestic violence on the students according to their extremities

Hypotheses Testing

Comparison of the Scale of Prevalence of Different Forms of Violence as Reported by Male and Female Students

Gender differences were tested across the forms of violence experienced by the students as a preliminary step to isolating differences involving gender. The results, as presented in Table 1, showed that females were more exposed to domestic violence than males, although the differences were majorly marginal between both sexes. As a result, another hypothesis testing was conducted as a pooled for both genders. The results are summarized in Figure 10 below.

Table 1: **Comparison of scale of prevalence of different forms of violence as reported by male and female students**

Forms of violence	Response	Male	Female	P-value	Remark
Physical violence	No	51.2	48.0	0.40	**Not Significant**
	Yes	41.1	58.9		
Emotional violence	No	44.9	55.1	0.53	**Not-Significant**
	Yes	48.0	52.0		
Sexual violence	No	46.6	53.4	0.72	**Not-Significant**
	Yes	44.4	55.6		
Property destruction	No	45.4	54.6	0.51	**Not-Significant**
	Yes	49.4	50.6		
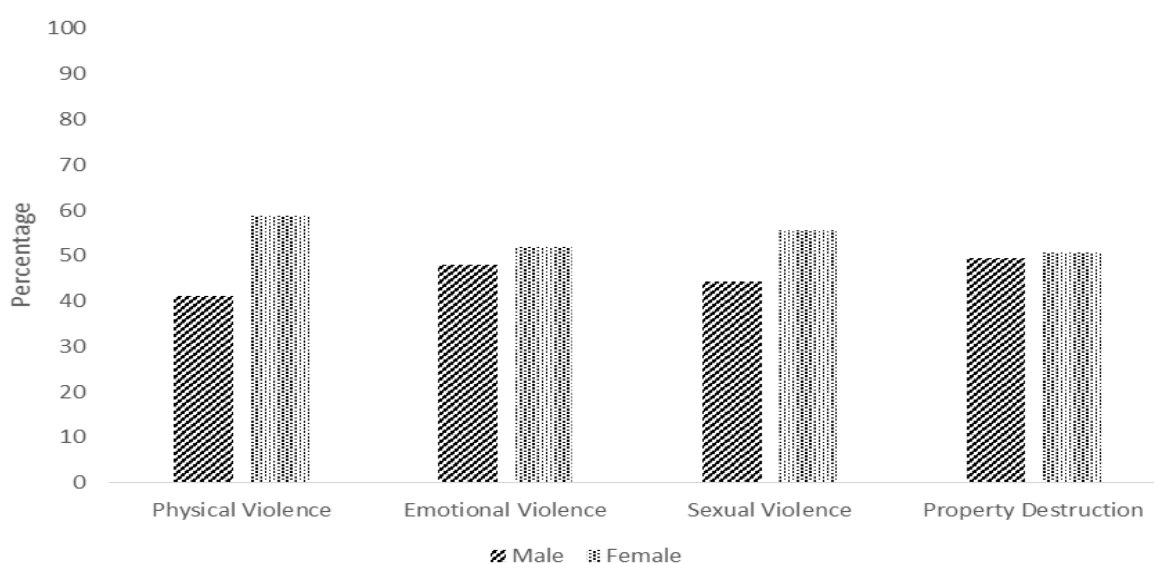
Figure 10: **Gender differences in prevalence of different forms of domestic violence experienced by the students**

Hypothesis 1: Influence of socio-demographic characteristics on the class participation profile (academic performance, students' attendance, class participation, discipline and behavioural pattern) of the students

In order to test the hypothesis that "*there is no significant relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics and the class participation profile of the students,*" the socio-demographic characteristics were used as categorical predictors to test their causal effect on the class participation profile of the students. It was observed that the socio-demographic characteristics did not significantly ($p > 0.05$) affect the class participation profile of the respondent students. None of the predictors registered a significant ($p > 0.05$) effect on the

academic performance of the students (Table 2). The total amount of variation in academic performance explained by the predictors (i.e., socio-demographic characteristics) as represented by the coefficient of determination (R^2), was very low at 0.020, implying that only about 2 % of the variation in academic performance could be explained by the socio-demographic characteristics. The socio-demographic characteristics also had no significant effect ($p > 0.05$) on the students' attendance and class participation, with a R^2 value of 0.010 recorded for both response variables, implying that only about 1 % of the total variation in students' attendance and class participation could be explained by the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (Table 2).

Similarly, the socio-demographic characteristics did not register a significant causal effect on the display of discipline by the students and their behavioral pattern (Table 3). The coefficients of determination for both variables were 0.010 and 0.015 respectively, implying that only about 1 % of the display of discipline by the students and 1.5 % of their behavioral pattern could be explained by the socio-demographic characteristics.

Table 2:   Influence of socio-demographic characteristics on the academic performance, students' attendance and class participation of the students

Predictors	B	Std. Error	T-statistic	P-Value	Remark	R^2
Academic Performance						0.020[NS]
Intercept	3.062	0.627	4.881	<0.001	***	
Age	-0.017	0.095	0.185	0.853	NS	
Gender	-0.083	0.106	0.786	0.432	NS	
Family type	0.091	0.075	1.219	0.223	NS	
Parent's/Guardian's Occupation	0.022	0.031	0.713	0.476	NS	
Class	0.118	0.077	1.534	0.126	NS	
Number of Siblings	-0.056	0.092	-0.608	0.544	NS	
Ethnicity	-0.138	0.087	-1.588	0.113	NS	
Religion	0.020	0.106	0.189	0.850	NS	
Student's Attendance						0.010[NS]
Intercept	2.775	0.494	5.612	<0.001	***	
Age	-0.017	0.075	-0.230	0.818	NS	
Gender	0.021	0.084	0.249	0.804	NS	
Family type	0.034	0.059	0.573	0.567	NS	
Parent's/Guardian's Occupation	-0.004	0.025	-0.167	0.867	NS	
Class	-0.075	0.060	-1.241	0.215	NS	
Number of Siblings	0.015	0.073	0.204	0.839	NS	
Ethnicity	0.072	0.068	1.048	0.296	NS	
Religion	0.025	0.083	0.301	0.764	NS	
Class Participation						0.010[NS]
Intercept	2.816	0.582	4.836	<0.001	***	
Age	0.062	0.087	0.708	0.480	NS	

	β	Std. Error	T-statistic	P-Value	Remarks
Gender	-0.180	0.098	-1.839	0.067	NS
Family type	0.124	0.069	1.788	0.075	NS
Parent's/Guardian's Occupation	0.075	0.029	2.618	0.009	NS
Class	-0.074	0.071	-1.051	0.294	NS
Number of Siblings	-0.054	0.085	-0.636	0.525	NS
Ethnicity	-0.034	0.080	-0.424	0.672	NS
Religion	-0.005	0.099	-0.047	0.963	NS

β: Co-efficient slopes;   Std. Error: Standard error;   T-statistic: Test statistics;
P-value: Probability value; R^2: Coefficient of determination;   NS: Not significant

Table 3:   Influence of socio-demographic characteristics on the discipline and behavioural pattern of the students

Predictors	β	Std. Error	T-statistic	P-Value	Remarks	ΔR^2
Discipline						0.010^{NS}
Intercept	2.112	0.538	3.926	<0.001	***	
Age	0.059	0.081	0.723	0.470	NS	
Gender	-0.051	0.091	-0.565	0.573	NS	
Family type	0.064	0.064	1.000	0.318	NS	
Parent's/Guardian's Occupation	0.031	0.027	1.161	0.246	NS	
Class	0.029	0.066	0.442	0.659	NS	
Number of Siblings	-0.030	0.079	-0.377	0.706	NS	
Ethnicity	0.047	0.074	0.628	0.530	NS	
Religion	0.077	0.091	0.853	0.394	NS	
Behavioral Pattern						0.015^{NS}
Intercept	2.447	0.570	4.296	<0.001	***	
Age	0.113	0.086	1.314	0.190	NS	
Gender	-0.010	0.096	-0.103	0.918	NS	
Family type	0.044	0.068	0.648	0.518	NS	
Parent's/Guardian's Occupation	0.006	0.028	0.201	0.841	NS	
Class	0.023	0.070	0.325	0.745	NS	
Number of Siblings	-0.069	0.084	-0.825	0.410	NS	
Ethnicity	-0.062	0.079	-0.783	0.434	NS	
Religion	0.109	0.096	1.133	0.258	NS	

β: Co-efficient slopes;   Std. Error: Standard error;   T-statistic: Test statistics.

P-value: Probability value; R^2: Coefficient of determination;   NS: Not significant

Hypothesis 2: Effect of domestic violence on the class participation profile of the students

The hypothesis that "*there is no significant effect of domestic violence on the class participation profile of the students*" is presented in Table 4. The exposure by some of the students to domestic violence did not register a significant (p>0.05) effect on their class participation profile. The coefficient of determination for each of the class participation profile variables was very low: 0.002 or 0.2 % for academic performance, 0.003 or 0.3 % for student's attendance, and 0.001 or 0.1 % for class participation discipline and behavioral pattern. This implies that the exposure of the students to domestic violence had very little to do with their academic performance, students' attendance, class participation, discipline and behavioral pattern, and that variables that accounted for the majority of the variation on their behavioral pattern were not captured in the present study.

Table 4: Effect of domestic violence on the class participation profile of the students

Predictors	B	Std. Error	T-statistic	P-Value	Remark	R^2
Academic Performance						0.002^{NS}
Intercept	3.087	0.209	14.798	<0.001		
Are you a victim of domestic violence	-0.097	0.116	-0.839	0.402		
Student's Attendance						0.003^{NS}
Intercept	3.212	0.162	19.809	<0.001		
Are you a victim of domestic violence	-0.093	0.090	-1.035	-1.035		
Class Participation						0.001^{NS}
Intercept	2.962	0.193	15.334	<0.001		
Are you a victim of domestic violence	-0.031	0.107	-0.293	0.770		
Discipline						0.001^{NS}
Intercept	3.022	0.177	17.044	<0.001		
Are you a victim of domestic violence	-0.032	0.098	-0.328	0.743		
Behavioral pattern						0.001^{NS}
Intercept	3.093	0.187	16.572	<0.001		
Are you a victim of domestic violence	-0.043	0.103	-0.416	0.678		

β: Co-efficient slopes;   Std. Error: Standard error;   T-statistic: Test statistics.

P-value: Probability value; R^2: Coefficient of determination;   NS: Not significant; S: Significant

Correlation Between the Forms of Domestic Violence and the Academic Performance of the Students

Correlations between the forms of physical abuse and the students' participation profile were majorly significant (Table 5). The correlation was however low and negative for most of the measured associations, implying that the forms of domestic violence experienced were tenable to negatively impact their academic participation profile. Physical abuse did not have a significant correlation with students' participation ($r = -0.06$, $p = 0.212 > 0.05$), but had negative significant correlations with academic performance ($r = -0.10$, $p = 0.038 < 0.05$), class participation ($r = -0.13$, $p = 0.010 < 0.05$), behavioral pattern ($r = -0.10$, $p = 0.043 < 0.05$) and a highly significant correlation with discipline ($r = -0.14$, $p = 0.005 < 0.01$). Emotional abuse only established a significant correlation with students' attendance ($r = -0.14$, $p = 0.004 < 0.01$). Other associations were not significant. Sexual abuse on the other hand established significant but negative correlations with academic performance ($r = -0.15$, $p = 0.002 < 0.01$), student attendance ($r = -0.12$, $p = 0.018 < 0.05$), class participation ($r = -0.14$, $p = 0.004 < 0.01$) and behavioral pattern ($r = -0.15$, $p = 0.003 < 0.01$). The correlation between sexual abuse and discipline was not significant. Correlations of property destruction with academic performance ($r = -0.104$, $p = 0.005 < 0.05$) and behavioral pattern ($r = -0.124$, $p = 0.049 < 0.05$) were the only significant associations recorded.

Table 5: Correlation between the forms of domestic violence and academic performance of the students

	Physical Abuse	Emotional Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Property destruction	Academic Performance	Student Attendance	Class Participation	Discipline	Behavioural Pattern
Physical Abuse	1	0.28**	0.29**	0.16**	-0.10*	-0.06	-0.127*	-0.137**	-0.100*
Emotional Abuse	0.28**	1	0.24**	0.17**	-0.06	-0.14**	-0.067	-0.006	-0.082
Sexual Abuse	0.29**	0.24**	1	0.22**	-0.15**	-0.117*	-0.142**	-0.081	-0.146**
Property destruction	0.16**	0.17**	0.22**	1	-0.11*	-0.09	-0.07	-0.102*	-0.117*
Academic Performance	-0.10*	-0.06	-0.15**	-0.11*	1	0.423**	0.461**	0.402**	0.442**
Student Attendance	-0.06	-0.14**	-0.12*	-0.09	0.42**	1	0.412**	0.327**	0.346**
Class Participation	-0.13*	-0.07	-0.14**	-0.07	0.46**	0.412**	1	0.445**	0.388**
Discipline	-0.14**	-0.01	-0.08	-0.10*	0.40**	0.327**	0.445**	1	0.480**
Behavioural Pattern	-0.10*	-0.08	-0.15**	-0.12*	0.44**	0.346**	0.388**	0.480**	1

DISCUSSION

The results of this study confirm the existence of domestic violence within the community, as both students and teachers demonstrated a clear understanding of what domestic violence entails. The responses from both groups indicated a widespread awareness of the forms of domestic violence, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual harassment, and aggressive behavior. This aligns with recent studies, such as Sim and Fulu (2023), who emphasized that domestic violence is pervasive and affects all aspects of life, including education. The descriptions of domestic violence provided by respondents are consistent with definitions provided by Gordon (2012), who noted that domestic violence includes any form of abuse or assault between individuals sharing an intimate relationship or living arrangement. A significant portion of the students reported experiencing domestic violence firsthand, while teachers also noted that episodes of violence were frequently observed both at home and in school settings. This corroborates findings by Lopez-Martinez et al. (2023), who also observed a strong correlation between children's low social status within the household and their vulnerability to violence. Power imbalances in familial relationships, often fueled by cultural or social norms, make children more prone to domestic violence, particularly in patriarchal societies.

The forms of domestic violence reported by the children and adolescents in this study primarily included physical and emotional abuse, which is consistent with findings from McTavish et al. (2016), who highlighted that physical abuse is often the most recognized form of violence experienced by children. Emotional abuse, although less visible, was also frequently reported and has long-term impacts on a child's self-esteem and mental health. Kanchiputu and Mwale (2016) further noted that repeated exposure to emotional abuse can lead to feelings of worthlessness in children, impairing their social and academic development.

Economic violence was another form of abuse mentioned by students and confirmed through focus group discussions. Examples of economic violence included the destruction of personal property, excessive labor, and denial of basic needs like food. This form of violence is often linked to power dynamics within the household, as noted in Ezeokana et al. (2023), where economic control is used as a tool of domination over children. In this study, several students shared experiences of being punished through acts such as having their school books destroyed, which not only affects their psychological well-being but also directly hinders their academic performance. Sexual violence, while reported less frequently, was another serious concern identified in the study. The few cases that were reported involved inappropriate touching and other forms of sexual harassment, reinforcing findings from Finkelhor et al. (2020), who observed that even limited exposure to sexual violence has severe psychological impacts on children, often manifesting as fear, withdrawal, or disruptive behavior in school. Teachers unanimously agreed that domestic violence negatively impacts children's behavior and academic performance, noting issues such as poor concentration, reduced academic achievement, aggression, and social withdrawal. These observations are consistent with Garcia-Moreno et al. (2013), who found that children exposed to domestic violence often exhibit emotional instability, difficulty focusing in class, and an overall decline in academic performance. Psychological violence, including verbal abuse and scolding, was also highlighted as a major factor affecting students' emotional well-being, echoing the conclusions of Cusack et al. (1999).

The negative correlations observed between the type of domestic violence experienced and academic performance in this study suggest that domestic violence has a profound impact on children's ability to succeed in school. As noted by López-Martínez et al. (2023), exposure to violence creates a stressful environment for children, impairing their cognitive functions, such as concentration and memory. Consequently, affected students may struggle to keep up with schoolwork, leading to poor academic outcomes. While some students may manage to mask their distress in social settings, the long-term consequences of domestic violence are likely to emerge in more subtle ways, such as behavioral problems and declining academic engagement.

IMPLICATIONS TO RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

This study contributes to knowledge by providing insight into the effects and consequences that children and adolescents face as a result of experiencing or witnessing domestic violence in their homes, particularly its impact on their academic performance. It broadens the understanding of how domestic violence affects the cognitive, emotional, and social development of school-aged children, thereby influencing their educational outcomes.

1. Parents should ensure they create a peaceful environment for children and refrain from displaying aggressive behaviors, as children tend to imitate the actions of adults around them (based on social learning theory).

2. Educators need to be trained to identify the signs of domestic violence in students and provide them with the necessary support through school-based counseling. This can help alleviate the emotional distress and improve the academic performance of students affected by domestic violence.

3. Schools should offer psychological services, including counseling and behavioral interventions, to support students dealing with domestic violence.

4. Community outreach and parental education programs should be initiated to increase awareness about the harmful effects of domestic violence on children and promote the use of non-violent forms of discipline at home.

5. Lawmakers should prioritize strengthening child protection policies and ensure that schools have adequate resources and collaboration with external agencies to effectively address and prevent domestic violence.

6. Future research should focus on examining the long-term academic and psychological consequences of domestic violence in various cultural settings to deepen the understanding of its impact on children's development.

CONCLUSION

This study confirmed the prevalence of domestic violence in the community, with both teachers and parents acknowledging its existence. Many students reported experiencing various forms of domestic violence, including physical, emotional, sexual, and economic abuse, often without fully understanding the severity of their situations. The signs of domestic violence among students, such as short attention spans, frequent troublemaking, bullying, and emotional withdrawal, were further corroborated by teachers during focus group discussions. The

inability of many victims to openly discuss their experiences due to fear and insecurity highlights the deep psychological impact of domestic violence. Through more supportive environments like focus group discussions, some students were able to express themselves more freely, revealing issues of low self-esteem and diminished confidence.

Teachers, meanwhile, were faced with the burden of managing the negative social, psychological, and moral consequences in affected students. The study's findings revealed that 80% to 100% of the student respondents had experienced some form of domestic violence, as confirmed by their teachers. The results showed that domestic violence affected not only the physical and emotional well-being of students but also disrupted their academic performance, causing absenteeism, tardiness, and a lack of interest in education. Overall, the research concludes that domestic violence significantly hinders children's cognitive, social, and emotional development, which in turn negatively impacts their academic success. This issue requires urgent attention and intervention to mitigate its detrimental effects on children, adolescents and their future development.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This study recommends further research to explore the predisposing factors that may exacerbate the impact of domestic violence on students' academic performance and school participation. Future studies should investigate variables such as socio-economic status, cultural norms, family dynamics, and mental health, which may contribute to or intensify the effects of domestic violence on children's educational outcomes. Additionally, longitudinal research could provide deeper insights into the long-term academic and psychological consequences of exposure to domestic violence.

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