

EXAMINATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND PERCEIVED STUDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated the link between domestic violence and perceived students' educational attainment and focused on determining the level to which violent actions carried out by some parents impact students; educational attainment in secondary schools in Rivers State. The study adopted two research questions and was guided by two null hypotheses. The study used the descriptive survey design and the population for the research was recorded as 111,903 comprising male and female students from secondary schools across Rivers State. The sample of the study was selected employing the method of stratified random sampling comprising of 443 male and 217 female students. The research used a structured questionnaire titled "Domestic Violence and Perceived Students Educational Attainment Questionnaire (DVPSEAQ)" as instrument for data collation. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance employing the z-test. The study identified amongst many other revelations that; domestic violence significantly impacts the emotions of students; access to family provision for school is impacted by domestic violence. Based on the findings from the research, a number of recommendations were offered by the researcher such as the need for pupils to be treated with affection in order to eradicate and minimize emotional and psychological issues. Guardians ought to make effort to provide essential learning materials for their wards in school and the educational aspirations of children should be encouraged and supported by their guardians.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Education, Attainment, Perception.

Introduction

Universally, it has been agreed upon that education remains a guaranteed ingredient for the attainment of sustainable development in any society today. Societies in various nations have long come to the conclusion that education stimulates societal and economic advancement through its impact on addressing challenges facing the society. Proponents have long held the belief that the motives and objective of education is universally constant. They contend that

education opens up opportunities for the gathering of needed mental and physical capabilities and competencies that assist individuals contribute to the advancement of the society (Okoh & Chidi, 2013). Education, thus, makes its contribution to the discovery of the talents of people. This recognition of the importance of education to development is reflected in

their National Policy on Education which perceives education as a “tool par excellence” that influences national advancement. According to Okoli (2011) the importance and impact of education on national development therefore can only be realized when sufficient attention is paid to the educational sector. Achebe (1998) states that the educational development of Nigeria has been rather slow and can be correlated to the failure of the leadership in the nation. Researchers raise the thought that developing nations are plagued with high levels of ignorance, mortality, corruption, extrajudicial killing etc (Ogwumike, 2002; Ucha, 2010).

The acquisition of education have over the years faced numerous challenges, such as poverty, distance to school and domestic violence to mention but a few. Domestic violence has been identified as one of the challenges that have more direct impact on children. Researchers have long observed the negative impact malnourishment has on the educational performance of kids (Ross & Anderson, 2010; Chinyoka, 2014). According to Chinyoka (2014) a child who is a victim of malnourishment such as deficiency in protein may be intellectually handicapped for life This viewpoint was also shared by Chokan & Khan (2010) who opined that the educational attainment as well as success of a child is influenced by experiences at home and to a large extent the encouragement and motivation they receive from their loved ones.

Statement of the Problem

It has been widely agreed that education continues to be a “veritable instrument” in the emancipation of the populace from the grip of ignorance, societal and political challenges that plagues societies. In the Nigerian context, education is perceived as “instrument par excellence” which influences the national development (National Policy on Education, FGN,

2014). Like most states in the Nigeria, Rivers States’ educational sector is handled with disparagement and this has consequential impact on the education of children in the state. In the sense that, children are not sent to schools, their fees are not regularly paid while most times they are over-burdened with house chores. Even when they are sent to school, the facilities and resources required for effective learning and teaching are not available or insufficient. More worrisome is the physical punishment meted out to these children at the slightest provocation. Researchers estimate that about 60 percent of pupils in secondary schools have been victims of ill-treatment in their homes (Hasan, 1983). This situation continues to impact the educational development and attainment of students in schools.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study examines domestic violence and perceived students’ educational attainment in secondary in Rivers State”. On the basis of this the following objectives were set for the study:

1. Identify the aspects of physical domestic violence that influence student’s emotional stability for academic attainment in secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. Determine “the impact of verbal domestic violence on the entry age of students into secondary schools in Rivers State”.

Research Questions

The following research questions for the study emanated from the above objectives:

1. What are the existing aspects of physical domestic that influence student’s emotional stability for academic attainment in secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. What is the influence of verbal domestic violence on the entry age of

pupils into secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study.

1. There is no significant difference between mean scores of male and female pupils on the existing aspects of physical domestic violence on the emotion stability or academic attainment of students in secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. There is “no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students’ age of entry into secondary school, based on domestic violence in Rivers State”

Domestic Violence

It has been generally accepted that violence is the application of force and coercion to achieve certain objectives (Imbusch, 2003). It is also described as violence that is done by an individual against another individual at home in a domestic arrangement such as matrimonial or co-habitation arrangements. Aihie (2009) observes that it is any action that is carried out to any of member of the family that has the potential to cause bodily harm or instill fear in the victim. It is a form of abuse that has the capability to bring about physical, mental, spiritual or economic pains as well as injuries to the victims (Ekahem, 2014). Researchers highlight that domestic violence has no respect for societal class, gender, wealth, sexual orientation, race, religion that can be experienced in a number of forms comprising of physical, mental, sexual and economic abuse (Cartel et al., Nwankwoala, 2006). Rakovec-Felser (2014) observes that domestic violence has the potential to be characterized as the misuse of power and control by an individual over another who is in an intimate relationship with them. These

emotional, physical and sexual abuses lead to intimidation, financial abuse, destruction of properties, harassment (Iwuama & Cookey, 2011; Petersen et al, 2014). Smith (2001) highlights that domestic violence is action that is employed to have the desires or wishes of any individual in the setting of the house accomplished particularly in a patriarchal society that is male dominated. Lloyd (2018) observes that violence that occurs inside the house in educational centers has the potential to impact the community and spill over into the society at large.

Highlighting the increasing dangers of violence in the society, Iwuama & Cookey (2011) points out that the various reports of domestic violence, social violence and disruptive behaviors published in national dailies are clear indications of the real challenges faced by teachers and community leaders in maintain peace and order between couples in the society today. Bunnet (2006) observes that in extreme circumstances, domestic has the potential to lead to death and these invoke serious implications on the society as a whole. As such it can be deduced that domestic violence covers a vast range of abuses ranging from battering, emotional abuse, dating abuse and matrimonial violence to mention but a few. Hence, domestic violence appears in varying patterns that depends on the individuals and the reasons motivating the perpetrating of such acts.

Educational Attainment

Education can be regarded as the acquisition of skills and competencies that are worth acquiring and it involves the acquisition of values, attitudes, norms and beliefs that are positive in nature (Fagerlind & Saha, 2016). Through education, individuals are inspired to attain greatness and it remains indispensable. It is the bedrock of socio-economic and political advancement of nations as the

acquisition of necessary competencies and knowledge is highly necessary if there is to serious contributions to the advancement of the society they find themselves (Onyido & Osigwe, 2019).

Educational attainment therefore can be described as the level of education a person has attained or finished. Simply put, educational attainment refers to success in achieving or reaching the educational level one aspires. Furthermore, educational attainment is the optimal stage of education an individual perceives that they can attain (Ebeshi, 2017). Educational attainment refers to the peak of one's educational achievement. As such, the perception of educational attainment varies across individuals. In some cases, people are content with just attaining secondary school or college education while others are content with their first degree school attainment from tertiary institutions whereas others seek to pursue their educational attainment beyond the first degree (Okaku, 2014). According to Ojetu (2016) educational attainment is no different from academic attainment in the sense that the highest levels of education an individual achieves is through their effort and hard work.

Physical Domestic Violence and Perceived Educational Attainment

Taking a critical look at the physical impacts of domestic violence, scholars observe that violence in the domestic scene cause and leads to physical deformation and bruises on the victims (Anyanwu, 2016). According to him, those who face physical domestic violence suffer from hearing impairment, broken bones to mention but few as a result of the slapping and kicking they are forced to experience. Most of these victims are seen with broken legs, lips, arms and scars all over their body. Moffit (2013) opines that if the impacts of these physical assaults do not get intervention or profession attention it

can lead to permanent features and psychological damages. According to Smith (2001), the bodies of victims of violence at the domestic scene are most times disfigured and often find it herculean to focus on achieve anything particularly their education. Scholars highlight that the physical impacts vary based on experiences, however, victims are known to suffer from mental and physical defects such as broken bones, vaginal and urinary infections, internal bleeding as well as pregnancy related issues to mention a few (Ishola, 2016).

Social Effects of Domestic Violence

In many cases, children who experience domestic violence are prevented from social activities within and outside the home. As a result of this, these children grow up having poor social relationship and interaction skills. This deficiency impacts their development in the school and impacts their academic performance (Eleby, 2009). As such, these victims find it challenging to adjust to the activities of education and either shy away from activities in school or become involved in these activities due to their denial at home. According to Ekahem (2014) preventing children from interacting with their peers and classmates has the potential to make them socially unable to fit into the society. Debaters postulate that training children in a society or environment that is filled with neglect and violence is disastrous to the advancement of the child as well as the family at large (Obi & Uzomba, 2007).

Emotional Effects of Domestic Violence

Emotions have long been identified as a critical aspect of man's psyche as such; emotional challenges affect the concentration, reasoning as well as critical analyzing of an individual. It is thus sing these emotions that an individual can carry out certain tasks employing some level of assistance and concentration. Without

emotional stability it is practically unimaginable for a person to embark on task and responsibilities accordingly. This buttresses why Anyawu (2006) argued that emotional torture has the ability to disorganize, upset and disorientate an individual from attaining set objectives and targets. Emotional abuse therefore remains unfriendly towards the attainment of set targets and goals and guardians who engage in emotional abuse are seen not discussing with each other even while in the same room or house (Sabastien, 2007). Researchers therefore assert that an individual should be in a stable emotional state only in situations where there is little or no distraction (Ebeshi, 2017). Notwithstanding, in this case victims of violence at home have little or no peace of mind with regards to their psychological as well as emotional problems. In some conditions, as a result of abandonment, some of the victims of violence at home are afraid of returning home after school hours (Agulanna, 1999). These pupils end “up leaving school very late because they consider the school premises as a safe haven where they can avoid the abuses at home”. These situations lead to emotional imbalance amongst victims. This view is supported by a number of scholars who highlight that stress remains one of the conditions that cause shock to students from homes where domestic violence is perpetuated (Egu & Asodike, 2013). They posit that stress refers to the tension or pressures associated with an individual's challenges in life. As such, stress impacts the academic attainment of students.

Methodology

• Research Design

The research adopted a descriptive survey design. The descriptive research design is

suitable for this investigation in the sense that it focuses on finding out the consequence of violence in the domestic scene and the educational attainment of students in secondary schools in Rivers State.

• Population of the Study

The population of students in senior secondary schools in the 23 Local Government Areas of Rivers State comprised 111, 903 students spread across the 247 schools in the state. **Sourced from Rivers State Senior Secondary School Board, Port Harcourt**

• Sample and Sampling Technique

The research took a sample size of 660 which was composed of 443 male and 217 female students from senior secondary schools spread across fifty one randomly sampled schools in twelve randomly sampled Local Government Areas in Rivers State. For the purpose of the research adopted the stratified random sampling technique with Taro Yamen's 1967 formula for sampling representative sample size.

• Instrument for Data Collection

The research employed a questionnaire titled “Domestic Violence and Students' Educational Attainment Questionnaire (DVSEAQ)” as the instrument of the study. The instrument was composed of two sections named section A and B.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What are the existing aspects of physical domestic violence that influence students' emotional stability for academic achievement in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 4.1: Mean opinion assessment of the influence of domestic violence on emotional stability among male and female students for academic achievement

S/N	Emotional stability Indices	Mean assessment		Mean Set	Remarks
		Male	Female		
1.	Flogging affects students' emotion for concentration	3.76	3.61	3.69	Agree
2.	Derogatory remarks make students sad thus remain off-task	3.38	3.92	3.65	Agree
3.	Denying students food affects their emotions	3.72	3.75	3.69	Agree
4.	Denying students freedom affects their emotions	3.44	3.69	3.41	Agree
5.	Abusing children sexually affects their emotions	3.79	3.95	3.87	Agree
	Aggregate mean	3.62	3.71	3.66	Agree

Data on Table 1 show that items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 had mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.5 and were all agreed that domestic violence has a great effect or influence on students' emotional stability in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

With an aggregate mean of 3.66 which is above the criterion mean of 2.5, both male and female students of public secondary schools in Rivers State agreed that flogging, derogatory remarks, denying students food, denying their freedom and abusing them sexually affect their emotional stability.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of verbal domestic violence on students' entry age into public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 4.2: Mean opinion assessment of the effect of domestic violence on students' entry age into secondary schools

S/N	Entry age indices	Mean assessment		Mean Set	remarks
		Male	Female		
6.	Students are not enrolled in school very early in life	3.24	2.84	3.04	Agree
7.	Some students are enrolled in school at age 18	3.36	3.60	3.48	Agree
8.	Some students go to school at old age	3.25	3.92	3.59	Agree
9.	Some students begin schooling at age 15	3.04	3.09	3.07	Agree
10.	Some students begin schooling at 17	3.27	3.94	3.60	Agree
	Aggregate mean	3.23	3.48	3.36	Agree

The data on Table 4.2 above show that all the items (7-10) had mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.5 which indicate that domestic violence highly influences students' entry age into secondary school

in Rivers State. With the average mean of 3.36 which is above the criterion mean of 2.5, it means that both male and female students of public secondary school unanimously agreed that domestic

violence affects students' entry age into secondary schools.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence between mean scores of male and female students on the existing aspects of domestic violence on emotional stability

or academic attainment in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

The hypothesis "compared male and female students on the influence of domestic violence on their emotional stability. The result of the test is summarized in Table 4.6 below".

Table 4.6: Summary of z-test of difference between male and female students on the Influence of domestic violence on their emotional stability

Categories	N	X	Std	z-cal	z-crit	Df	Remark
Male	443	3.69	0.56	2.25	1.96	658	Significant Reject
Female	217	3.71	0.45				

The data on Table 4.6 show a summary of categories, mean, standard deviation scores/values and z-value of difference that exist between the mean ratings of male and female secondary school students' emotional stability.

The calculated z-value used in testing hypothesis 1 stood at 2.25 whereas the critical z-value was recorded at 1.96, using 658 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. At 0.05 level of significance as well as 658 degrees of freedom, the

calculate z.value of 2.25 is greater than the critical z-value of 1.96. Hence, there is a significance difference between the female students with a higher mean score of 3.71 equated to their male counterparts of 3.69.

This shows that female students are emotionally affected by domestic violence more than their male counterparts. As such, there is a rejection of the null hypothesis while the alternative hypothesis accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There "is no significant influence between the mean scores of male and female students' age of entry into public secondary school, based on domestic violence in Rivers State".

This hypothesis compared male and female students on the influence of domestic violence on their entry age into public secondary schools in Rivers State. The result of the test is presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Summary of z-test of difference between male and female students on the influence of domestic violence on their entry age into secondary schools in Rivers State

Categories	n	X	Std	Df	z-cal	z-cri	Remark
Male	443	3.11	0.90	658	3.89	1.96	Significant Reject
Female	217	3.48	0.40				

The data on Table 4.7 show a summary of categories, mean, standard deviation score values and z-value of difference between the mean ratings of male and female

students' age of entry into secondary schools in Rivers State.

The calculated z-value used in testing hypothesis 2 stood at 3.89 while the

critical z-value stood at 1.96, using 658 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. At 0.05 level of significance and 658 degree of freedom (dl), the calculated z-value of 3.89 is greater than the criterion z-value of 1.96.

Hence, there is a significant difference between the female students with a higher mean score of 3.48 compared to their male counterparts with a mean score of 3.11. This means that domestic violence has influence on entry age of female students into secondary school than their male counterparts. Therefore, the test is significant and so the null hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the family and what happens therein determines children's educational attainment. Based on this, domestic violence has significant influence on students' educational attainment at any level of education.

Recommendation

1. Efforts should be made by parents or care givers to avoid flogging, making derogatory remarks, denying children food, denying them freedom of association and the likes, in order for them not to have emotional and psychological problems.
2. Plans should be made to send children to school very early in life.
3. Children should not be harshly treated so that they can be bold and confident in facing the challenges of life.

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