

# Innovations

## The Impact of Domestic Violence on Pupils' Academic Performance in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *This study investigates the impact of domestic violence on pupils' academic performance in Ikere Local Government Area, Ekiti State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was employed, and the population consisted of pupils from both public and private primary schools in the area. A total sample of 200 pupils from 10 schools (five publics and five private) was selected using a stratified sampling technique. Four self-designed instruments were used: Physical Effects of Domestic Violence on Pupils (PEDVP), Effect of Domestic Violence on Loss of Concentration of Pupils (EDVLCPP), Effect of Domestic Violence on Poor Study Habit among Pupils (EDPSHP), and Effect of Domestic Violence on Pupils Performance (EDVPP). The reliability coefficients for these instruments were 0.71, 0.70, 0.69, and 0.80, respectively, as determined by Cronbach's alpha. Data analysis involved T-tests and frequency counts. The results show that domestic violence significantly affects pupils' academic performance, concentration, study habits, and physical wellbeing, with aggressive behavior, depression, anxiety, and trauma being the most common physical effects. These findings underscore the negative impact of domestic violence on pupils' academic performance.*

**Keywords:** *Domestic violence, Academic performance, Pupils*

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### 1. Introduction

Domestic violence refers to a pattern of abusive behavior in which one intimate partner seeks to gain or retain control over the other through various forms of abuse, including physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, or financial harm. In some cases, this may also involve restricting the victim's social interactions outside the home. Children who witness or are directly exposed to domestic abuse often experience significant emotional, psychological, and educational consequences. Research indicates that children exposed to domestic violence are at an increased risk of developing anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD),

all of which can negatively affect their social, emotional, and academic functioning (Horn & Lieberman, 2011).

The home environment of children exposed to domestic violence is often unpredictable, tense, and controlled by fear. Instead of enjoying a safe, supportive, and predictable environment, these children grow up worrying about their safety and their future. Studies show that such exposure impairs children's cognitive, emotional, and social development, including their ability to learn effectively (Horn & Lieberman, 2011). The impact of domestic violence on children is further complicated by other factors, such as socioeconomic status and intellectual ability. For instance, IQ, which is a key predictor of academic success, is often negatively influenced by socioeconomic class, with children from lower social classes tending to score lower on standardized IQ tests compared to their peers from higher social classes (Shaffer & Kipp, 2012; Hegelund, Flensburg-Madsen, Dammeyer, & Mortensen, 2018).

Domestic violence encompasses a wide range of abusive behaviors, from physical acts of violence like pushing, hitting, or slapping, to more insidious forms of emotional, social, and financial abuse (Tina, Jaelline, & Jeanne, 2016). These abusive behaviors not only harm the victim but also create an atmosphere of fear and instability for children. Research by Pingley (2017) underscores the broad impact of domestic abuse, which affects individuals of all ages, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds, but is particularly harmful to children. Øverlien (2010) and Mittal (2020) found that children who witness domestic violence may develop a lasting fear of violence and become more likely to mimic such behaviors in their own relationships later in life. This cycle of abuse can severely impact children's emotional and academic growth, leading to challenges in forming healthy relationships and succeeding in school (Gilbert et al., 2015).

The negative effects of domestic violence extend beyond the home, influencing a child's academic success. A child's academic achievement is influenced by a complex interplay of factors, both external and internal, including cognitive abilities, temperament, and family dynamics. Domestic violence creates an environment that undermines academic achievement by diverting a child's attention away from education and towards survival. According to Mittal (2020), children living in violent homes may struggle to concentrate in school and fail to develop healthy study habits, which significantly affects their performance. Furthermore, children from violent homes often internalize the belief that violence is acceptable, further exacerbating their emotional and social challenges (Thornton, 2014; Lloyd, 2018).

Research consistently shows that children who experience or witness domestic violence perform poorly in school, are more likely to repeat grades, and have a higher dropout rate (Narad & Abdullah, 2016; Signh, Malik, & Signh, 2016). Given these findings, it is crucial to examine how domestic violence impacts children's academic performance, especially in regions like Ekiti State, Nigeria, where support systems may be insufficient.

Domestic violence is a widespread issue, yet there is limited understanding of how it affects children's academic performance. Children exposed to domestic violence often lack the necessary support networks and interventions to help them cope with the trauma they experience. This gap in support can perpetuate a cycle of disadvantage, limiting their future opportunities. While the immediate effects of domestic violence may not always be visible in a child's academic performance, the long-term implications of dysfunctional family dynamics such as those involving abuse—can have lasting consequences on a child's ability to succeed in school. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of domestic violence on children's academic performance in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

## **2 Literature review**

### **2.1 Prevalence of Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence remains a pervasive issue in many parts of the world, including Nigeria, where it significantly affects the lives of children. Studies on domestic violence in Ekiti State, a Southwestern region of Nigeria, indicate a disturbing prevalence of violent incidents within households. According to Daramola (2025), his study reveals a high prevalence of domestic violence among secondary school students in Ikere-Ekiti, with physical, emotional, and psychological abuse being the most common forms. He also affirms that the trauma and stress associated with domestic violence significantly impair students' cognitive abilities, concentration, and overall motivation to learn. The work highlighted that over 40% of households in Ekiti State experience some form of domestic violence, particularly in low-income areas where financial stress may exacerbate the problem.

### **2.2 Effects of Domestic Violence on Children's Academic Performance**

Children growing up in households where domestic violence is prevalent face numerous academic challenges. Research indicates that exposure to domestic violence can significantly impair cognitive function, emotional regulation, and social development, all of which are critical to academic success (Daramola 2025). For example, children who witness or experience violence at home often suffer from anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which can lead to difficulties in concentration and learning. In Ekiti State, many pupils from violent households demonstrate poor academic performance, which is attributed to the emotional and psychological toll of living in an abusive environment.

Furthermore, domestic violence can affect school attendance. Children from abusive homes often miss school due to fear, emotional distress, or instability at home. Daramola (2025) reported that children exposed to domestic violence in Ekiti State are more likely to experience truancy and inconsistent school attendance, which, in turn, negatively impacts their academic achievement. This disruption in their education can contribute to long-term educational setbacks and social disadvantage.

## **2.4 Consequences of Domestic Violence on Children**

The consequences of domestic violence on children go beyond academic performance and extend to their overall development. In addition to the psychological effects, children who witness domestic violence are more likely to display anxiety and depression, emotional distress, eating and sleeping disturbances and behavioral issues, such as aggression, withdrawal, or defiance (Ezeajughu 2021). This behavioral change often manifests in school settings, where affected children may engage in disruptive behavior or have difficulty interacting with peers and teachers. These behavioral problems can lead to disciplinary actions, further isolating the child and worsening their academic performance. Moreover, the long-term effects of generational challenges for both individuals and communities. domestic violence can contribute to a cycle of abuse, where children who grow up in violent households are more likely to either become victims or perpetrators of domestic violence in adulthood (Olivia Harrison 2021). Researchers found that there was a significant risk of harm to a child's physical, emotional, and social development *after* they witnessed domestic violence. This harm includes difficulty learning, limited social skills, exhibition of violent, risky or delinquent behavior, and increased risk of depression or severe anxiety.

## **3 Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study utilized a descriptive survey research design to investigate the effects of domestic violence on primary school pupils in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The research aimed to explore various dimensions of the impact of domestic violence on children's physical and psychological well-being.

### **3.2 Sample and Sampling techniques**

Stratified random sampling was employed to select 10 schools, five from public and five from private institutions, within the sampled local government area. After selecting the schools, 20 pupils were randomly chosen from each school, resulting in a total sample size of 200 pupils.

### **3.3 Research instrument**

Four self-designed instruments were used to collect data for this study. The instruments included: Physical Effects of Domestic Violence on Pupils (PEDVP), Effect of Domestic Violence on Loss of Concentration of Pupils (EDVLCPP), Effect of Domestic Violence on Poor Study Habits among Pupils (EDPSHP), Effect of Domestic Violence on Pupils' Performance questionnaire (EDVPP)

### **3.4 Procedure of data collection**

The researcher visited the schools to familiarize herself with the teachers and the pupils to the school used. She later went to administer the questionnaire with the

help of two (2) trained research assistants and the questionnaires were collected immediately.

**3.5 Ethical considerations**

Permission was sought from the Local Government Education Authorities (LGEA) to make use of the schools in their jurisdictions for the study. Parents signed a consent form was provided to all participants

**4 Results**

Table 1 presents the percentage analysis of the physical effects of domestic violence on school children in Ikere-Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The results indicate that aggressive behavior (96.0%), depression (80.0%), anxiety (70.0%), bruises (62.0%), and trauma (54.0%) were the most commonly reported physical effects of domestic violence. Conversely, speech disorders (48.0%), fractures (44.0%), and eating disorders (40.0%) were the least reported effects.

**Table 1: Percentage analysis of physical effect of domestic violence on school children**

S/ N	Items	Yes	%	No	%	Rank
1	Bruise	31	62.0	19	38.0	4 <sup>th</sup>
2	Fracture	22	44.0	28	56.0	7 <sup>th</sup>
3	Trauma	27	54.0	23	36.0	5 <sup>th</sup>
4	Anxiety	35	70.0	15	30.0	3 <sup>rd</sup>
5	Depression	40	80.0	10	20.0	2 <sup>nd</sup>
6	Eating Disorder	20	40.0	30	60.0	8 <sup>th</sup>
7	Speech Disorder	24	48.0	26	52.0	6 <sup>th</sup>
8	Aggressive behavior	48	96.0	2	4.0	1 <sup>st</sup>

Table 2 presents the t-test analysis of the effect of domestic violence on the concentration of pupils. The result shows that  $t_{cal}$  (17.54) is greater than  $t_{tab}$  (2.132) at a 0.05 level of significance. Since  $t_{cal}$  exceeded  $t_{tab}$ , the null hypothesis was rejected, implying that domestic violence significantly affects pupils' concentration in Ikere-Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State.

**Table 2: t-test analysis of data on effect of domestic violence on loss of concentration of pupils**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	T <sub>cal</sub>	T <sub>tab</sub>
Yes	136	57.5	5.65	3	17.54	2.353
No	64	22.5	5.65			

Table 3 presents the t-test analysis of the effect of domestic violence on poor study habits. The result reveals that  $t_{cal}$  (10.29) is greater than  $t_{tab}$  (2.132) at a 0.05 level of significance. Since  $t_{cal}$  exceeded  $t_{tab}$ , the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that domestic violence has a significant effect on poor study habits among pupils in Ikere-Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State.

**Table 3: t-test analysis of data on effect of domestic violence on poor study habit**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	$T_{cal}$	$T_{tab}$
Yes	160	24.5	4.2	3	10.29	2.353
No	40	15.5	4.2			

Table 4 presents the t-test analysis of the effect of domestic violence on pupils' academic performance. The result shows that  $t_{cal}$  (8.55) is greater than  $t_{tab}$  (2.132) at a 0.05 level of significance. Since  $t_{cal}$  exceeded  $t_{tab}$ , the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that domestic violence significantly affects pupils' academic performance in Ikere-Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State.

**Table 4: T-test analysis of data on effect of domestic violence on pupils performance**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	$T_{cal}$	$T_{tab}$
Yes	157	20.25	4.52	3	8.55	2.353
No	43	12.21	4.52			

**Discussion**

The study examined the effects of domestic violence on pupils' academic performance in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The results of the study show that domestic violence has a significant impact on pupils' concentration, study habits, and academic performance.

Regarding the first hypothesis, the study revealed that domestic violence significantly affects pupils' concentration. This finding aligns with the work of Rohenkohl and Castro (2012), who stated that children exposed to high levels of parental conflict exhibit more behavioral and emotional problems than children from less conflict-ridden families. Furthermore, previous studies have linked severe domestic violence exposure to school problems such as repetition, dropout, and discontinuation of studies (Durand, Schraiber, Franca-Junior, & Barros, 2011).

The second hypothesis also indicated a significant effect of domestic violence on poor study habits. This finding supports Mittal (2020), who asserted that domestic violence influences children's emotional well-being, leading to depression, anxiety, and social withdrawal. Similarly, Omozusi et al. (2021) found a significant positive correlation between physical abuse and academic performance.

The third hypothesis showed a significant impact of domestic violence on pupils' academic performance, consistent with Kunjana (2020), who highlighted the detrimental effects of domestic violence on children's education.

### **Limitation**

This study focused on pupils in public and private schools in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State alone in order to make coverage of the study manageable so that the necessary and quality research can be ensured. The researcher encountered some challenges. Some pupils could not read and understand the questionnaire so researcher and assistant have to read for the pupils. This consumes a lot of time and makes the filling of the questionnaire longer than expectation.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence on the effects of domestic violence on pupils' academic performance. The study establishes that exposure to domestic violence fosters an environment of fear, anxiety, and emotional distress, which negatively impacts children's academic performance. The most common physical effects identified were aggressive behavior, depression, anxiety, bruises, and trauma. Additionally, the study found that domestic violence affects pupils' concentration, study habits, and overall academic performance. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed: The government should implement strategies to raise awareness about child domestic violence and educate the younger generation to prevent its perpetuation, Schools should adopt teaching methods based on scientific evidence to optimize learning potential, regardless of pupils' social or environmental backgrounds, Community members should actively participate in identifying and supporting children experiencing domestic violence rather than perceiving it as an issue unrelated to them.

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