Impact Of Exposure To Domestic Violence On Social And Psychological Wellbeing Of Students In Tertiary Institutions In Ibadan

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Abstract

Domestic violence is a global challenge with previous studies focusing on the devastating effects on the victims while the impact on those exposed to the violence remains largely unexplored. Understanding the consequences of exposure to violence is essential to combating its negative effects. The study examined the impact of exposure to domestic violence on social and psychological wellbeing of students in tertiary institutions in Ibadan.

Descriptive survey research design of the ex-post facto type was adopted for the study. The population comprises of students in selected public and private tertiary institutions of in Ibadan. A simple random sampling technique was used to select three hundred and sixty respondents for the study. A questionnaire tagged "Exposure to Domestic Violence and Wellbeing Questionnaire" (EDVAWQ) with three distinctive sections was the main instrument used for the study. Section B measuring Exposure to Domestic Violence had reliability coefficient of 0.78, section C measuring Psychological Wellbeing had reliability coefficient of 0.85 while section D, measuring Social Wellbeing had coefficient of 0.87.

Findings showed that there was significant relationship between exposure to domestic violence and psychological well being of students in tertiary institutions ($r = .194$, $n = 360$, $P < 0.05$), that there was significant relationships between exposure to domestic violence and social wellbeing of the adolescents ($r = .412$, $n = 360$, $P < 0.05$) and that there was a linear combination (joint effect) of social and psychological wellbeing on domestic violence $F(3,312) = 43.056$; $R= .541$, $R^2 = .293$, Adj. $R^2 = 0.286$; $P < .05$).

Based on these findings, the study recommended that parents should be mindful of their children's presence when there is a disagreement and should ensure it is resolve amicably and not allow it to degenerate into violence.

Key words: Domestic violence, psychological and social wellbeing, tertiary institutions, students

Introduction

The family is the smallest unit of the society and the foundation of human society. Families are the strongest socializing forces of life. It is also the microcosm and bed-rock of the society, an arena that provides for intimacy, love, caring, sharing, happiness, and economic cooperation, meeting physiological and social needs of her members (Okobia, 2008). In the same vein, the Action Health (2003) described the family as haven where joy, peace and succour are provided. The family teach children to eschew unacceptable behaviour, to delay gratification and to respect the right of others (Oni, 2009). However, studies has shown that this may not be the case for some families as noted by Onuoha (2008) and Kembe (2008) that some families are battle grounds where victims are abused while the children, adolescents and young adults are exposed to violence as witnesses.

According to World Health Organization (2005) report every year, hundreds of millions of children are exposed to domestic violence at home, and this has a powerful and profound impact on their lives and hopes for the future. These children not only watch one parent violently assaulting another, they often hear the distressing sounds of violence. According to The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF, 2005), domestic or family violence also refer to as intimate partner violence is the intentional and persistent abuse of anyone in the home in a way that causes pain, distress or injury.

It refers to any abusive treatment of one family member by another, thus violating the law of basic human rights. It includes battering of intimate partners and others, sexual abuse of children, marital rape and traditional practices that are harmful to women such as female genital mutilation. Domestic violence occurs globally and families from all social, racial, economic, educational and religious backgrounds experience domestic violence in different ways (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002), although there is gross under reporting of violence against women (Fawole, Aderonmu & Fawole, 2005). WHO global survey indicated that approximately 10-69% of women report to have been physically assaulted by an intimate male partner at some point in their lives. The prevalence of domestic violence in Nigeria varies from one region to the other with a range of 11-79% (Shamu, Abrahams, Temmerman, Musekiwa & Zarowsky, 2011). According to Orpin, Chris & Puthussery (2020) this wide range is exist due to the facts that there is no standard method for estimation of domestic violence.

The prevalence of domestic violence has a profound impact on the psychological and social impact on the adolescents and young persons who witness the incidents [WH0, 2019]. According to Paul, Monique and Gerard (2005), young people grow up in a multitude of social settings that shape their cognitions,

feelings, and behaviour through their perceptions and interpretations of these settings. By the time they reach adolescence, they must have had many favourable and unfavourable experiences in terms of the role of family members, teachers and peers in the process of learning and development. This may create diverse mind-sets that continue to influence their learning and development. They either feel secure or insecure in terms of the availability of support from others, thus affecting their social as well as psychological well-being needed to excel in their study.

Some injuries are not physical but emotional. For example, victims exposed to domestic violence often have low self-esteem, finding it difficult to trust others. The anger and stress experienced by victims may lead to depression and other emotional disorders sometimes leading to suicide (Centre for Disease Control (CDC), 2006). They may also exhibit harmful health behaviour like excessive smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, engagement in risky behaviours and harmful sexual activity. For instance, they may grow up not trusting other people, go into violent relationships, become socially withdrawn, and/or afraid to be in an intimate relationship. This ultimately affects their social wellbeing with adverse effect on their academics.

Children and adolescents are often principal victims of domestic violence (WHO, 2005). Witnessing, experiencing abuse or living in an environment where someone is being physically abused can be psychologically devastating for an adolescent who may be in turn be susceptible to depression. Children who are exposed to domestic violence during their upbringing have the tendency to experience poor social and psychological wellbeing (Dodd, 2009). Exposure to domestic violence generally impacts how a child develops psychologically and socially (Lazenbatt, & Thompson-Cree, 2009). Some psychological problems that can result from exposure to domestic violence include increased aggressiveness, anxiety, and may also affected changes in how a child socializes with friends, family, and authorities (Dodd, 2009). This problem is compounded in students in tertiary institutions who have to cope with academic stress.

Statement of the Problem

Children and adolescents are one of the most vulnerable groups that suffer the burden of exposure to domestic violence. According to Finkelhor,Turner, Ormrod & Hamby (2009) they suffer higher rates of exposure to violence and crime than adults, which is responsible for a considerable burden of physical and mental health morbidity among this group of people. Furthermore, Anthony (2014) states that witnessing violence in the family threatens the overall development as person raised in violent homes are known to exhibit violent tendencies as they grow up particularly for adolescence which is a critical stage for emotional and social growth. Despite, the various negative effects of exposure to domestic violence, studies such as

UNICEF, Nigeria (2011) states that there is scarcity of data on this subject because violence between couple is regarded strictly as family affairs.

Previous studies on family and domestic violence have focused more on the devastating effects of domestic violence on victims while the impact on those directly exposed or who witnessed violence especially the growing young members of such families remains a largely unexplored area. This is a major research gap that this study intends to fill with focus on students in tertiary institutions. Understanding the grave consequences of exposure to violence is essential to combating its negative effects. It is against this background that this study, will examines the impact of exposure to domestic violence on the social and psychological wellbeing of students in tertiary institutions of learning in Ibadan and proffer useful suggestions.

Literature Review

The negative consequences of children and adolescents' exposure to violence, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and witnessing domestic violence are well documented (Zahradnik, Stewart, O'Connor, Stevens, Ungar & Wekerle, 2010). Many studies have shown that children exposed to violence are at risk for various negative outcomes from childhood to adulthood. Examples of such negative outcomes associated with exposure to violence at home include dropping out of school

(Kaplow & Widom, 2007), violence perpetration (Fang & Corso, 2008), Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Kaplow & Widom, 2007), alcohol-related problems (Thornberry, Ireland & Smith, 2001) and illicit drug use (Widom, Marmorstein & White, 2006); depression anxiety and conduct disorder (Turner, Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2006).

Raphaela (2015) finds that children who witness domestic violence are likely to engage in fighting, disobedience to constituted authority and often feel reluctant in doing school work. In a related study, Aihie (2009) discovers that witnessing abuse in the family and living in an environment where someone else, usually a care giver is a victim of abuse can be psychologically and socially devastating for any young person. A study by Yuping, Longfei, Xingfu, Yu, Xiaoyun, Yalin & Xingguang (2016) reveals that exposure to domestic violence may result in different behavioural problems for boys and girls. The study reveals that behavioural problems such as anxiety/depression are significantly associated with exposure to family violence. Any subtype of abuse might adversely affect adolescence's social behaviours while anxiety/depression might exacerbate social withdrawal. The study concludes that such adolescents may lack social skills, have higher rates of being offensive, and adopt violent and aggressive behaviours learned from their parents. Delinquency is another predominant behaviour in children exposed to domestic violence, especially in abused boys.

Delinquency is associated with emotional and physical abuse and physical neglect.

Objective of the study

The main objective of the study is to examine the impact of exposure to domestic violence on the social and psychological well being of students in tertiary institutions in Ibadan.

Specific objectives of the study include:

- To examine the relationship between exposure to domestic violence and psychological well being of students in tertiary institutions.
- To examine the relationship between exposure to domestic violence and social well being of students in tertiary institutions.
- To examine the joint significant relationship between (psychological & social wellbeing) and exposure to domestic violence of students in tertiary institutions.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses guide the study:

i.   There will be no significant relationship between exposure to domestic violence and psychological wellbeing of student in tertiary institutions.

ii. There will be no significant relationship between exposure to domestic violence

and social well being of students in tertiary institutions.

iii. There will be no joint significant relationship between (psychological & social wellbeing) and exposure to domestic violence of students in tertiary institutions.

Methodology

Research Design

The study is a quantitative in nature and adopted the Ex post facto, also refer to as after-the-fact research design in which investigation starts after the incidence has occurred without interference from the researcher.

Population

The study population consist of students in selected tertiary institutions in Ibadan Metropolis. The tertiary institutions include, University of Ibadan, Lead City University, The Polytechnic, Ibadan and Ibadan City Polytechnic, Ibadan.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Four tertiary institutions which comprise two Universities (one public and one private) and two polytechnics, (one private and one public) were purposively selected for the study. This is to allow students in both private and public institutions to be part of the study. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 90 students from each of the institutions making a total of 360 participants for the study.

Research Instrument

A research instrument tagged "Exposure to Domestic Violence and Wellbeing Questionnaire" (EDVAWQ) was the main instrument used for the research. The instrument has three sections. Section B measure Students exposure to domestic violence within their family, section C measures Psychological Wellbeing of the students while section D measures Social Wellbeing of the respondents.

Section A: Exposure to Domestic Violence Scale (EDVS). Contained 10 items that measures domestic violence within the family, the items were drawn from the *Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2)* developed by David, Murray, Sherry, Sue and David (1976) to explore intra-family conflict and violence, focusing particularly on the partners in the family. The scale is one of the most widely used scales in family conflicts studies. The scale was adapted to suit the study and the Nigeria peculiar environment. Respondents were asked if they have been exposed or have witness domestic violence in their family as described in the questionnaire.

Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS)

The instrument consisted of 10 items measuring psychological well-being. The items were drawn from the Psychological well-being scale developed by Ryff (1995) with emphasis on positive relations with others, purpose in life, self acceptance and environmental mastery.

Social Wellbeing Scale (SWBS)

The instrument consisted of 10 items measuring social wellbeing of the students. The items were adapted social wellbeing assessment scale developed by Spindy, Edward, Kingley and Seper (2004) with emphasis on social behaviour in relation to family, social activities and academic life.

The participants were asked to respond to a 4 – point rating scale ranging from strongly disagree (4) to strongly agree (1); with high scores indicating a positive or favourable overall psychological and social well being.

Validation of the Research Instrument

The scale was validated through consultation with professionals for necessary critic and suggestions to amend the draft of the instrument. Consequently, a number of items in the questionnaire were amended. Only those items left are relevant and valid were retained in the questionnaire.

Reliability of the Research Instrument

For suitability with the present study, the reliability of the test instrument was re established using 30 students from other tertiary institutions that were not part of the study. Each item of the questionnaire was checked and all ambiguities and irrelevances were deleted while a reliability coefficient was obtained for each sections of the questionnaire. Reliability co-efficient of the instrument after

pre test was section B = 0.78, section C = 0.85, section D = 0.87.

Methods of Data Analysis

The hypotheses were also analyzed using Pearson product Moment Correlation. This is a statistical technique of investigating the relationship between two quantitative, continuous variables (exposure to domestic violence, psychological and social wellbeing) in terms of their strength and direction.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant relationship between exposure to domestic violence and psychological wellbeing of students in tertiary institutions.

Table 1: Showing relationship between exposure to domestic violence and psychological wellbeing of students in tertiary institutions

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	n	r	P	Remark
Exposure to domestic violence	32.1804	4.4582				
Psychological well-being	16.2785	2.2236	360	.194	.000	Sig.

It is shown in the above table that there is significant relationship between exposure to domestic violence and psychological well being of students in tertiary institutions (r = .194, n = 360, P < 0.05). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There will be no significant relationship between exposure to domestic violence and social wellbeing of tertiary institution students.

Table 2: Showing relationship between exposure to domestic violence and social wellbeing of tertiary institution students

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	n	r	P	Remark
Exposure to domestic violence	32.1804	4.4582	360	.412	.000	Sig.
Social wellbeing	16.8734	2.3251				

It is shown in the above table that there is significant relationships between exposure to domestic violence and social wellbeing of the students (r = .412, n = 360, P < 0.05). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 3: There will be no joint significant relationship between (psychological & social wellbeing) and exposure to domestic violence of students in tertiary institutions.

Table3: Regression Analysis Showing joint relationship between (psychological & social wellbeing) and exposure to domestic violence in tertiary institutions students.

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Remark
Regression	1833.063	2	611.021		
Residual	4427.655	357	14.191	21.593	Sig
Total	6260.718	359			

Table 7 above showed that the linear combination relationship of (psychological & social well being) and exposure of domestic violence was significant F (3,312) = 43.056; R= .541, R^2 = .293, Adj. R^2 = 0.286; P < .05). About 29% of the variation was accounted for by the independent variables. Null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the first hypothesis revealed that there is significant relationship between exposure to domestic violence and psychological well being of students in tertiary institutions. This finding is in line with the findings of Cynthia & Ullman (2009), who find out that adolescent exposure to domestic violence is often associated with enduring psychological dysfunction. Browne & Finkelhor (2000) also note that depression and feelings of inferiority are other challenges faced by victims of domestic violence. While Brickman & Briere (1984) posit that interpersonal problem, delinquency, and substance abuse are common anti-social behaviour among victims of exposure to domestic violence.

Individuals who are exposed to domestic violence suffer the same negative consequences as the victim and are often referred to as the "invincible" or "silent victims". Strain due to negative family experiences can take various forms on those who experience it such as anger. The manifestation of these emotions is often behavioural, for example, they may become withdrawn, non-verbal, and exhibit anti-social behaviours. It can also lead to sleeping difficulty and inability to concentrate in their studies.

The result of the second hypothesis also revealed that there is significant relationship between exposure to domestic violence and social wellbeing of the students in tertiary institutions. This finding is in line with a number of studies. For example, Callahan, Price, & Hilsenroth 2003; Carlson, McNutt, & Choi (2003) and Fassler, Amodeo, Griffin, Clay, & Ellis (2005) mention that exposure to domestic violence is associated with poor social adjustment, less life satisfaction, and negative behaviour in adolescents. Munni and Malhi (2006) in their study of South Asian high school students reported that those exposed to domestic violence had poorer school performance and adjustment scores. Similarly,

Henning, Leitenberg, Coffey, Bennett & Jankowski (1997) point out that students who had witnessed domestic violence as children are more distressed and experience social adjustments problems than those who did not witness domestic violence.

More specifically, adolescence can begin to externalize their negative emotions through either talking about what's going on or through their behaviour. Being exposed to violence may lead to feelings and behaviours that make social functioning difficult. One's ability to be "well" is socially situated which involves ability to relate with others. Witness of domestic violence may withdraw from social activities and become defiant in school. Unless these underlying negative experiences are dealt with, they may not be able to achieve their academic ambition.

The result of the third hypothesis revealed the linear combination of psychological wellbeing and social well being to exposure to domestic violence is significant. This finding is supported by Bonnar's (2010), conclusion that the negative psychosocial effects of childhood exposure to domestic violence often persist into adulthood, some of the potential negative outcomes are emotional distress and inability to relate with peers. This suggests exposure to domestic violence victims experience physical and emotional distress which may have overlapping influences on the victim's behaviour. Julio, Rosa-Alcázar, and López-Soler (2011) conclude in

their study that majority of cases of adolescents' experience numerous negative impact on the physical, psychological and behavioural levels.

The effect of domestic violence can be devastating and long lasting especially on adolescents. Students who are exposed to violence at home are likely to be withdrawn from friends as a result of poor self-esteem. They are also at the risk of school drop-out, delinquency, substance abuse and academic failure. Furthermore, they are at greater risk of repeating the cycle as adults by becoming abusers themselves. In order to address the negative impacts associated with exposure to domestic violence, counsellors develop strategies need to identify affected students and provide intervention.

Conclusion

The study showed that students who witnessed domestic violence at home often exhibit poor psychological as well as social wellbeing. It thus affects their socialization and academic performance. Given the detrimental effects of domestic violence on the students in tertiary institutions should ensure that students who exhibit negative traits are assisted. Furthermore, future studies may consider more effective methodologies such as longitudinal study design which allowed researchers to explore how circumstances earlier in life can influence later outcomes.

Implication for Social Workers

There is need for social workers to develop strategies to identify students who exposed to or witness domestic violence at home and counsel them. Furthermore, they need to create awareness programme to enlighten the public on the dangers inherent with exposure to domestic. Therefore, they need to work with other stakeholders in the communities such as religious groups, institutions and other relevant organizations. In collaboration with these groups, they need to create awareness that individuals exposed to violence at home are at greater risk of repeating the cycle as adults by becoming abusers themselves.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Parents should be mindful of their children's presence when there is a disagreement. They should try and resolve their differences amicably and should not allow it to degenerate into violence.
- Parents should endeavor to settle their differences in the absence of their children or wards in order to prevent the negative impact of exposure to family violence.
- Schools administrators, counsellors, social welfare officers should organize seminars for parents to enlighten them on the consequences of home violence on the students.

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