

ASSESSMENT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN AS A PREDICTOR OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOUR IN KADUNA SOUTH

¹Yasmin Aminu Ahmad, ¹Fadare Gbenga Oba, ²Charlton Jose,
¹David Markus Shekwolo PhD

¹Department of Psychology, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna

²Defence Space Administration, Ministry of Defence, Abuja- Nigeria

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6593010>

Published Date: 30-May-2022

Abstract: The study assessed domestic violence as predictors of delinquent behaviour among children in Kaduna State. Survey design was employed with two hundred and fifty (250) participants selected using simple random sampling technique drawn from Command Secondary School, Kachia Road, Government Day Secondary School, Kakuri in Kaduna South, and Borstal Training Institute Barnawa, Kaduna with the age ranges from 11-above years who were children both male and female. Questionnaire was used to collect data. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Independent Sample t-test were used to test the hypotheses. Two hypotheses were tested. Hypothesis one revealed a mean and standard deviation scores for Domestic violence (M= 10.68, SD= 4.536) and delinquent behaviour (M= 12.79, SD= 3.518). Further analysis revealed a statistically significant $r(248) = 0.311, P < 0.05$ positive relationship between domestic violence and children delinquent behaviour. In other words, the hypothesis was confirmed. Hypothesis two reveals that there is no statistical significant difference in delinquent behaviour between children from low socio-economic status and their counterpart from high socio-economic status $t(df=248) = -0.04, p > .05$. Observation of the means however indicates that children from high socio-economic status families scored slightly higher on delinquent behaviour (M=12.57, SD=2.61) compared to their counterparts from the low socio-economic status families (M=12.03, SD=2.78). This was however not confirmed. We concluded and recommended that relationship between domestic violence and juvenile delinquent behaviour in Kaduna South. Parents and guardians should make sure that they give their children adequate attention at home especially in regard to incidence of violence either from the parents, relatives or peer group (friends) who they mix and mingle with.

Keywords: Assessment, Domestic Violence, Children, Predictor and Juvenile Delinquent Behaviour.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations (2019), domestic abuse also called “domestic violence” or “intimate partner violence”, can be defined as a pattern of behaviour in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviours that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure, or wound someone. Domestic abuse can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. It can occur within a range of relationships including couples who are married, living together or dating. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels. Domestic violence is an ongoing

experience of physical, psychological, and/or sexual abuse in the home that is used to establish power and control over another person (Flitcraft, Hadley, Hendricks-Matthews, McLeer & Warshaw, 2020).

Domestic violence is prominent in Nigeria as in many parts of Africa (Punch Newspaper, 20th September, 2013). There is a deep cultural belief in Nigeria that it is socially acceptable to hit a woman to discipline a spouse (Daily Trust, 21st September, 2013), domestic violence is tolerated in virtually all cultures in Nigeria in the guise of obedience for either a spouse, parent or family members. Cases of domestic violence is on the high and shows no signs of reduction in Nigeria, regardless of the age, tribe, religion or even social status. Incidents of domestic violence in Nigeria include battery, beatings, torture, acid baths, rape, and consequently, death. It is however, estimated that approximately one in every three women suffers domestic violence and Intimate Partner Violence from the hands of those who claim to love and supposedly, protect them. The menace is eating deep as most of the victims do not speak out about violations of their rights, as a result of nonchalance, insensitivity, and negative response from their immediate family and society at large Amnesty Nigeria. (Retrieved May 19, 2021).

Although awareness about the rate of domestic violence in our society is increasing, the public health ramifications have only recently been recognized in the medical community. Majority of available literature to date has focused on the effect of domestic violence on the primary victim ignoring such questions as what effect does witnessing domestic violence have on secondary victims such as children who live in homes where partner abuse occurs? It is estimated that 3.2 million American children witness incidents of domestic violence annually (Carlson, 2014).

In Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa with a predominantly younger population of less than 15 years of age (Federal Ministry of Health, Abuja, 2016). However, many children face a life of absence of educational opportunities, poor physical and mental health (Rights of the Child in Nigeria Report, 2005). Despite the enormous natural endowment of the country, development has been slow due to poor public management, and serious crisis of governance resulting in decaying infrastructure, stagnant economy, corruption and widespread poverty (A Nigerian Report. Human Development Initiatives, 2004). A life of want, family instability, exposure to physical, sexual and emotional abuse has been associated with delinquent behaviour among children and so a large number of children in Nigeria could be involved with the juvenile justice system (Oloruntimehin, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Family is the single most important influence in a child's life. From their first moments of life, children depend on parents and family to protect them and provide for their needs. Parents and family form a child's first relationships. They are a child's first teachers and act as role models in how to act and how to experience the world around them. By nurturing and teaching children during their early years, families play an important role in making sure children are ready to learn when they enter school. Children thrive when parents are able to actively promote their positive growth and development. However, when this important pillar in a child's life is broken or the institution damaged, incidence of delinquency could prevail in the future (Smart Beginning). Therefore, family serves as a natural support system and a barrier against outside forces attempting to negatively influence children (Stern, Northman & Van Slyck, 2014). It will form or act as a tool of destruction and the downfall for the child.

Related to the above, data has shown that an intact home with a mother and father (emphasis on the father) has a stabilizing effect and may act as a deterrent in certain areas of juvenile delinquency (Stern et al., 2014). An intact family structure has been found to influence a child's susceptibility to peer pressure (Steinberg, 2017), contribute to offspring development and capabilities in adapting to society (Smith, & Walters, 2018) and is linked to fewer incidences of delinquency related issues. Children from broken homes have been found to be involved in a significantly higher amount of delinquent acts than children from intact homes. Both male and female children from broken homes were found to be negatively affected by parental absence.

For instance, girls from a single parent household (emphasis on paternal absence) have been associated with delinquency issues related to vandalism and auto trespassing (Austin, 2018), run away, incorrigibility and sexual deviancy (Weeks, 2014), in northern Nigeria children raised by a woman most especially girls are shun away by suitors because it is believed that a single mother lacks the capacity to raise a child alone. Male children from broken homes have been found to be involved in higher rates of alcohol and drug usage, promiscuity, property offenses and traffic violation. Children from a broken home have been found to be two to three times more likely to have emotional and behavioural problems, when compared to children from intact homes (Popenoe, 2015).

Issues of increased child delinquency in urban areas particularly Kaduna South where children are seen roaming and sleeping in the streets without their parents providing basic necessities such as food, shelter, clothing, health service and education draw the attention of the researcher to embark on such study.

Therefore, to understand the challenges that is pushing children to juvenile delinquent behaviour as result of domestic violence in some households in Kaduna South local government area, this study would be undertaken.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were considered in the study:

- i. To assess the relationship between domestic violence on children and juvenile delinquent behaviour in Kaduna South.
- ii. To find out if socio-economic status of parents have impact on Juvenile delinquent behaviour of children in Kaduna South.

2. METHODS

Design

This study employed survey research design which is a quantitative method for collecting information from a pool of participants. It is also the process of conducting research using questionnaires that researchers send to survey respondents. The survey research is a method that accommodate Quantitative technique where a research focus and relies on objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaire surveys

Participants

Two hundred and fifty (250) participants of the study were drawn from Command Secondary School, Kachia Road, Government Day Secondary School, Kakuri in Kaduna South, and Borstal Training Institute Barnawa, Kaduna with the age range from 11-above years who were children both male and female.

Sampling Size/ Sample Technique

The sample size refers to the portion of the population that was expected to be examined or studied, the population size for this research is 2500. Children from the Borstal Training institute, Barnawa constitute 150 while children from SS3 section of Command Secondary School, Kachia Road and Government Day Secondary School, Kakuri in Kaduna South constitute 200 making a total of 350 sample size. This research adopts Simple Random sampling technique to handpicked children to answer the questionnaire. In addition, the research adopted Simple Random sampling technique to administer questionnaire to respondents in the field. This random selection guarantees that each individual has an independent and equal chance of being selected.

Instrument

In this study there will be two questionnaires that will be used to collect raw data, one for the children and the second for the staff. The first questionnaire had thirty-six (36) items divided into three (3) sections, the section A is for Demographic data of the respondents with eleven (11) items, section B is on Domestic violence with thirteen (13) items while the section C has twelve (12) on Juvenile delinquency. This questionnaire is for children and to some extent their parents. The second questionnaire has fourteen (14) items divided into two (2) sections, section A has eight (8) items on domestic violence whilst section B has six (6) items on Juvenile delinquency which its target respondents to be teachers, parents, staff of juvenile centres at Ibadan Street, Magajin Gari and staff of Borstal institute.

Statistical Analysis Used

Three methods of statistical analysis will be adopted in this project they are basically descriptive method. Independent sample t-test is a type of inferential statistic used to determine if there is a significant difference between two variables. Second method adopted is the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation coefficient which is a measure of the strength and direction of association that exists between two variables measured on at least an interval scale. It basically analyse hypotheses that involves the relationship of two variables.

3. RESULTS

Data Presentation

Table 1: Frequency and Percentages of the Characteristics of Participants

DEMOGRAPHICS		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
Gender	Male	193	77.2
	Female	57	22.8
	Total	250	100%
Parents Socio/ Status	High	125	50.0
	Low	125	50.0
	Total	250	100%
Parents Marital Status	Single Parents	7	2.8
	Married	131	52.4
	Divorced/Separated	70	28.0
	Total	250	100%
Religion	Islam	132	52.8
	Christianity	104	41.6
	Total	250	100%
Age	11-13	7	2.8
	14-17	125	50.0
	18 Above	118	47.2
	Total	250	100%

Table 1 shows the frequencies and percentages of the characteristics of 250 participants (193 males and 57 females). Age ranged between 11 above years. Age was further grouped as 11-13 years (N=7, 2.8%), 14-17 years (N=125, 50.0%) and 18 above years (N=118, 47.2%). Parents Marital status: Single parents (N=7, 2.8%), married (N= 131, 52.4%) and divorced/separated (N= 70, 28.0%). Religion: Islam (N= 132, 52.8%) and Christianity (N= 104, 41.6%). Parents Socio-economic status: High (N=125, 50.0%), Low (N= 125, 50.0%).

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant relationship between domestic violence and children delinquent behaviour in Kaduna South. The hypothesis was tested with Pearson Product-Moment Correlation in table 2

Table 2: Relationship between Domestic Violence and Delinquent Behaviour among Children in Kaduna State

Variables	M	SD	df	r	Sig.
Domestic Violence	10.68	4.536	248	0.311	0.000
Delinquent Beh	12.79	3.518			

$$r(248) = 0.353, P < 0.05$$

Table 2 shows the summary results of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation between domestic violence and children delinquent behaviour. The results revealed the mean and standard deviation scores for Domestic violence (M= 10.68, SD= 4.536) and delinquent behaviour (M= 12.79, SD= 3.518). Further analysis revealed a statistically significant $r(248) = 0.311, P < 0.05$ positive relationship between domestic violence and children delinquent behaviour. In other words, the hypothesis was confirmed in the study. This result reveals that the higher the rate of exposure to domestic violence, the higher the delinquent behaviour.

Hypothesis Two: There will be a statistically significant difference in delinquent behaviour between children from high socio-economic status and those from low socio-economic status. The test of this hypothesis was carried out using the independent t-test. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Independent t-test showing difference in delinquent behaviour between children from high versus low socio-economic status

Variables	N	M	SD	df	T	P
Low Socio	125	12.03	2.78	248	-0.04	.03
High Socio	125	12.57	2.61			

Table 3 shows the summary results of the independent t-test reveals that there is no statistical significant difference in delinquent behaviour between children from low socio-economic status and their counterpart from high socio-economic status $t(df=248) = -0.04, p > .05$. Observation of the means however indicates that children from high socio-economic status families scored slightly higher on delinquent behaviour ($M=12.57, SD=2.61$) compared to their counterparts from the low socio-economic status families ($M=12.03, SD=2.78$). This was however not significant. On the basis of this result, research hypothesis two was not confirmed.

4. DISCUSSION

This study aimed at an assessment of domestic violence on children as a predictor of juvenile delinquent behaviour in Kaduna South. Various views of scholars that contributed to the discussion on the psychological, socio-economic impact and effect of domestic violence on child juvenile delinquent behaviour at national and local environment such as the Kaduna South which is a multi-ethno-religious settings were thoroughly analysed in the literature review.

The result of the test of the first hypothesis returned a statistically significant positive correlation between domestic violence and psychological distress among the respondents. This result reveals that the higher the rate of domestic violence, the higher the level of delinquent behaviour among children. This is in agreement with previous research findings. Children who witness domestic violence have been found to exhibit higher levels of anxiety and depression than those children who have not witnessed violence (Stiles, 2002). Feelings of fear, anger, grief, shame, distrust, and powerlessness are among the host of emotional reactions that child witnesses may suffer. Children who are exposed to domestic violence have a higher risk of suicide (Bernard, 2013). Some research has found that adolescent witnesses “are more likely to have a fatalistic view of the future resulting in an increased rate of risk taking and antisocial behavior, such as school truancy, early sexual activity, substance abuse, and delinquency” (Stiles, 2002). Child abuse and exposure to domestic violence results in some forms of psychiatric disorders and suicidal behavior among children (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2014).

The result from the second hypothesis revealed that children from families with low socio-economic status did not differ significantly from their counterpart from high socio-economic status on delinquent behaviour. This finding implies that delinquent behaviours in children cut across socio-economic lines. While “crimes” of children from low socio-economic status may differ in nature from “crimes” of children of the rich, the sum total of such behaviour cross the poor-rich boundary. For example, Siegel (2001) found no clear cut evidence of class difference and delinquent behaviour. This is because children from high socio economic backgrounds a very likely to possess the resources that can make them engage in delinquent behaviours, such as having enough money to buy drugs and alcohol, children from low income families on the other hand may engage in negative vices such as armed robbery and petty theft to raise money to engage in drug taking etc.

This finding however is contrary to the theoretical position by Cohen (2015) which posits that delinquent behaviour is predominant among lower class adolescents. However, this is a theoretical position which was centred on working class versus the upper class in society. The opinion of Birkhead (2012) also goes contrary to the findings in this study. Birkhead opined that the vast majority of children in the US that walk into any delinquency courtroom are living at or below the poverty level with one or both of their parents unemployed. If their family members have jobs, they earn minimum wage and their homes are in low-income neighborhoods with no book stores, libraries, or playgrounds within walking distance, they rely on food stamps, attend low performing public schools and are chronically absent or have developmental delays, learning disorders, or mental illnesses.

5. CONCLUSION

In respect to finding out on the nature of the relationship between domestic violence and juvenile delinquent behaviour in Kaduna South. The study concluded that there is a relationship between domestic violence and juvenile delinquent behaviour in among children in Kaduna South. Also that parents' level of literacy, meagre means of livelihood and lack of stable home which translate to the socio-economic status of the parents have positive impact on the adolescents' incidences toward committing juvenile delinquency in Kaduna South.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher after effective conduct of the study suggests the followings to tackle the chances, effect and incidence of domestic violence and its ability to influence the behaviour of children toward juvenile delinquency:

- i. The study recommends that parents and guardians should make sure that they give their children adequate attention at home especially in regard to incidence of violence either from the parents, relatives or peer group (friends) who they mix and mingle with.
- ii. The society must play a positive role toward child upbringing by exhibiting good moral values worth emulating and taking care of the less privileged thereby desist from committing violence against children.
- iii. Provision of quality and proper educational for children will prevent them from engaging in delinquent behaviour hence, all stakeholders such as governments, community leaders, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and parents should put hand on deck to ensure all children are in schools.
- iv. Federal, states and local governments should enact new laws that could regulate the behaviour of parents toward their children in regard to domestic violence.
- v. Enlightenment campaign in regard to extending unconditional love and care by parent and the communities should be pursued because it have the tendency to discourage these children from engaging in delinquent behaviours.
- vi. Child care regulatory agencies such as Borstal juvenile rehabilitation institutions social welfare services centres across the federation should be strengthened to undertake their duties diligently.

Implication of Findings

Assessments undertaken by this research brought to fore the various factors inimical to domestic violence that have the tendency to push to children to commit juvenile delinquency especially children from homes that socio-economic disadvantages such absence of decent shelter, lack of or low level of literacy by the parents and poverty. Findings in this study are expected to fill the gaps that other researches of this magnitude failed to address particularly in Kaduna South of Kaduna State, Nigeria. The study further advice that other areas not explored by this research should be taken serious for further investigation.

REFERENCES

- [1] Austin, B. (2018). Juvenile justice administration and child prisoners in Nigeria. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*, 13, (2), 18-32.
- [2] Benard, Y. (2013). Allegations of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Family Law Children's Proceedings: A Pre-reform Exploratory Study. Research Report no. 15, *Australian Institute of Family Studies*.
- [3] Birkhead, T. R. (2012). Delinquent by reason of poverty. *Washington Journal of Law and Policy*, 38. Retrieved May 23rd, 2017 from <http://www.openscholarship.wustl.edu/lawjournalallawpolicy/vol38/iss1/4>
- [4] Carlton, G. E. (2014). Family disruption, delinquent conduct and the effect of sub- classification. *American Sociological Review*, 37, 93-99.
- [5] Cohen, A. K. (2015). *Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang*. New York: Free Press.
- [6] Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2014). *Child maltreatment 2012: Summary of key findings*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau.

- [7] Daily Trust, (2013). *Juvenile justice administration in Nigeria: Philosophy and practice*. Centre for Law Enforcement Education Lagos, Nigeria.
- [8] Flitcraft, J.M., Hadley, M., Hendricks, M., Mattern, R., Mcleer, G., & Warsha, H. (2020). Delinquent behaviours among students exposed to family violence in Quebec schools. *Adolescents Saude*, 12(3), 43–52.
- [9] Human Development Institute (2018). What You Need To Know About Borstal Training Institution. Article by PR Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://prnigeria.com/2018/05/09/what-borstal-training-institution/>
- [10] Oluruntimehi, A. (2005). Prevalence of domestic violence in Nigeria: Implications for counselling. *Edo Journal of Counselling*, 2, (1), 136-148.
- [11] Punch Newspaper, (2013). Juvenile justice administration in Nigeria. *Nigerian Union of Justice System Law Review*, 2, 573.
- [12] Popenoe, P. (2015). Broken homes: impact on adolescents. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 28 (2), 95-99.
- [13] Siegel, L.T. & Welsh, B. (2001). *Juvenile Delinquency; The core* (4thed). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/ engaged learning.
- [14] Stiles, M. J. (2002). "Domestic violence screening: Prevalence and outcomes in a Canadian HIV population". *AIDS Patient Care and STDs* 24 (12): 763–770.
- [15] Stern, D., Norther, S., & Vanslyck, K. (2014, February 05). *Bandura - social learning theory*. Simply Psychology. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/bandura.html>
- [16] Sternberg, A.D. (2017). *The Relationship between Juvenile Delinquency and Family Unit Structure*. Theses, Dissertations and Capstones. Paper 750.
- [17] Smith, R. M. & Walters, J. (1978). Delinquent and non-delinquent males' perception of their fathers. *Adolescence*, 13 (49), 21-28.
- [18] Right of the Child in Nigeria (2005). Spousal violence in southwest Nigeria: Prevalence and correlates. *Journal of Women's Health Care*, 4, (4), 263-273.
- [19] Weeks, S. (2014). *The impact of domestic violence on children: A literature review*. Report prepared by: The Australian domestic & family violence clearinghouse, The University of New South Wales For: The Benevolent Society