

# Effects of Domestic Violence on Students: A Case Study of the University of Fiji Students

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**Abstract:** This research examined the effects of domestic violence on students in University of Fiji. The main goal of this research was to identify the implications and problems of domestic violence faced by the students in the University of Fiji. Generally domestic violence at home is most prevalent among married couples as well as students which are the main focus of this research and it involves aggressive, violent behaviors that are more common in males other than females. The method used to collect relevant information based on Domestic Violence involves distribution of questionnaires to students, personal observations from point of view, and through mass media including newspaper articles and internet sources. It was revealed in the research that majority of females are the victims of domestic violence. Also most of the female students have experienced physical and sexual abuse. Most of the students also experienced stress, fear and tension including self- low esteem due to related problems of domestic violence. Therefore this research basically focuses on problems of domestic violence as well as how to strongly influenced the public to consider this problems and stop domestic violence.

**Keywords:** Domestic violence, students, abuse, victims, problems.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The research based on the effects of ‘domestic violence’ on University of Fiji students. However, outstanding and low grades undergraduate students are selected to be a respondent. Therefore, domestic violence is the violent or aggressive behavior within the home, typically involving the physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional and psychological abuse against females of either a spouse or partner or the students. For example these abuses may affect students in terms of having low grades or not cooperating in their school works. Furthermore, the effects of domestic violence have become major concerns and serious issues for most students especially females in Fiji. This is because majority of female students now experienced different forms or types of domestic violence especially at home. Furthermore since women are the victims of domestic violence, most men or males usually treat them with low status and unequal rights in terms of personal rights which literally mean that men usually dominates or deprived women of their rights and liberties and this can be referred to as “coercive control”. According to the Fiji Times domestic violence statistics, it said that “64 per cent of women who have ever been in an intimate relationship experienced physical or sexual violence or both by a husband or intimate partner in their lifetime. 24 per cent experienced physical or sexual violence in the past 12 months and 61 per cent of ever-partnered women experienced physical violence in their lifetime and 19 per cent in the past 12 months, 34 per cent of ever-partnered women experienced sexual violence in their lifetime; 58 per cent of ever-partnered women experienced emotional violence in their lifetime; and Overall, 72 per cent of ever-partnered women experienced at least one or more of the three forms of violence by their husband or partner in their lifetime.” (Swami.N, 2016). It is proved that Fiji is one of the highest rates of domestic violence in the world. However, the research will mainly base on three questions; to what extent students experience ‘Domestic Violence’, What are the reasons or causes that lead to domestic violence?, and how to identify the effects of domestic violence on students in University of Fiji. University of Fiji is also one of the top Universities in Fiji which is located in Saweni, Lautoka and it was established in December 2004 under academic leadership of the Fiji Institute of Applied Studies. Nonetheless, the significance of this research was to further understand the implications of domestic violence most especially its effects on students in University of Fiji, and therefore through the research it would significantly help the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation, Police, The Fiji Women’s Crisis Center and academics to accomplish some of the changes that might be considered in controlling the issues of domestic violence.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

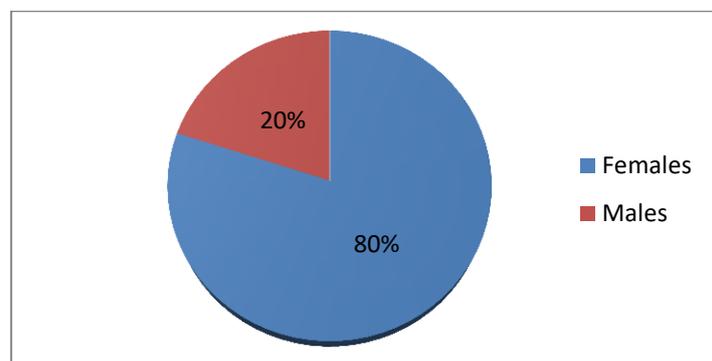
Domestic violence at home is generally a crime that can bring about various short-and long haul physical and psychological well-being issues. A victim of domestic violence may experience family problems or have physical wounds that can incorporate cuts, bruises, bite marks, concussions, broken bones, penetrative injuries such as knife wounds, miscarriages, joint damage, loss of hearing and vision, migraines, permanent disfigurement, arthritis, hypertension, 84 coronary illness, and sexually transmitted diseases including human papillomavirus, which can prompt cervical tumor and eventually death (Abbot & Williamson, 1999; Coker, Hopenhayn, DeSimone, Bush, & Crofford, 2009; McCaw, Golding, Farley, & Minkoff, 2007). Majority of females are the victims of domestic violence which is similar to a report that stated that "The high proportion of women who have experienced very severe physical attacks is alarming: 44% or more than 2 in 5 ever-partnered women have been punched, kicked, dragged, beaten up, choked, burned, threatened with a weapon, or actually had a weapon used against them." (New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2013). Furthermore since women are the victims of domestic violence, most men or males usually treat them with low status and unequal rights in terms of personal rights which literally mean that men usually dominates or deprived women of their rights and liberties and this can be referred to as "coercive control". According to (NYS office for the prevention of Domestic Violence, OPDV Bulletin, 2013) women are usually vulnerable to coercive controls since they have no rights in political status, for example about 60% to 80% of abused women have experienced coercive control beyond physical and emotional abuse and if they withdraw or prefer not to follow the rule (coercive control), then thus the men would often use violence against them. Therefore in coercive control it is males who usually possess the "Gender based privilege" over women. There are various forms of domestic violence which includes physical abuse that is the most common form of domestic violence that involves punching, kicking, stabbing, slapping, choking, and shooting etc....that may result in major injuries. Another form of domestic violence is Emotional abuse which is often difficult for victims involved and it involves humiliation, criticism and using of insulting words/ languages. Financial abuse is also a form of domestic violence that may occur through ceasing of job opportunities especially for women by their husbands or students may not able to access enough money or no money at all from their parents this might due to shortage of money or other problems. Moreover Psychological abuse involves the abuser being harsh to his or her partner (victim) by giving out threats and preventing the victim from talking to other people unless permission is given.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

Participants include 30 undergraduate students who volunteer themselves freely. Questionnaires were developed from the collected researched data (s) obtained from the internet and are distributed to selected undergraduate students volunteers in the University of Fiji (Unifiji) who have already gave in their consent to participate willingly in answering all of the questions given to them. Questionnaire was implemented instead of interview, since it is cheap and makes our research easier to arrange and also respondents could answer our questions well by giving the right or exact information (truth) without hesitation and feeling ashamed.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Socio Demographic Data



**Figure 1. Gender of Respondents**

Fig. 1 shows the gender of respondents who participated in the study. The study comprised 80% females and 20% males.

#### 4.2 Research question 1: Extent of which Students experience 'Domestic Violence'

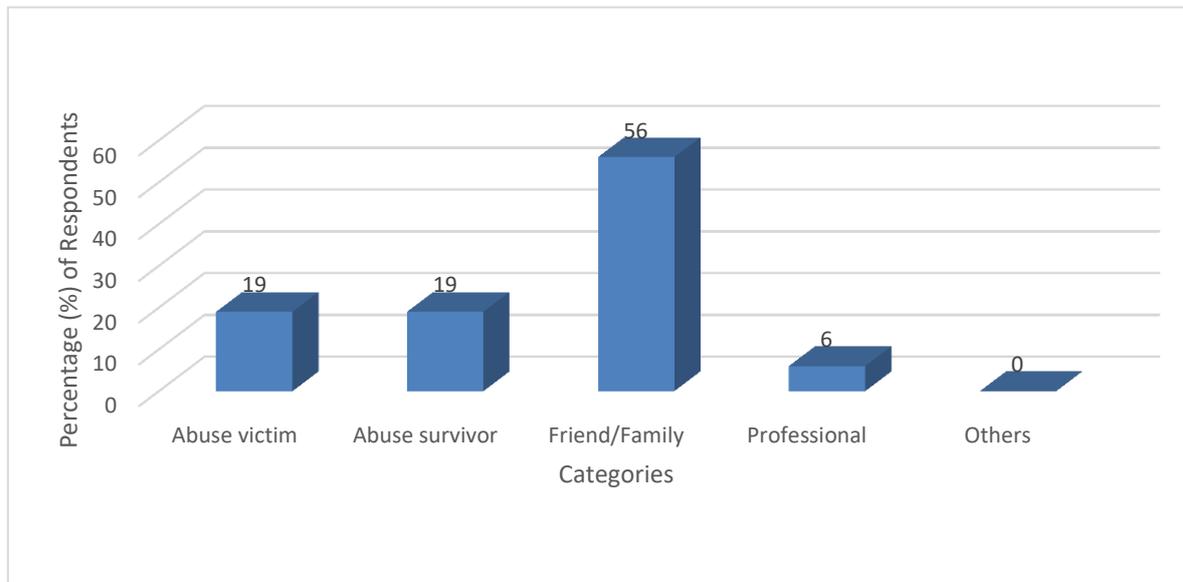
Four questions were designed in the questionnaire to meet this aim of the study.

Questions 1 show which violence students involved in like abuse victim or professional or abuse survivor.

Question 2 indicates different types of abuse students experienced during their lives.

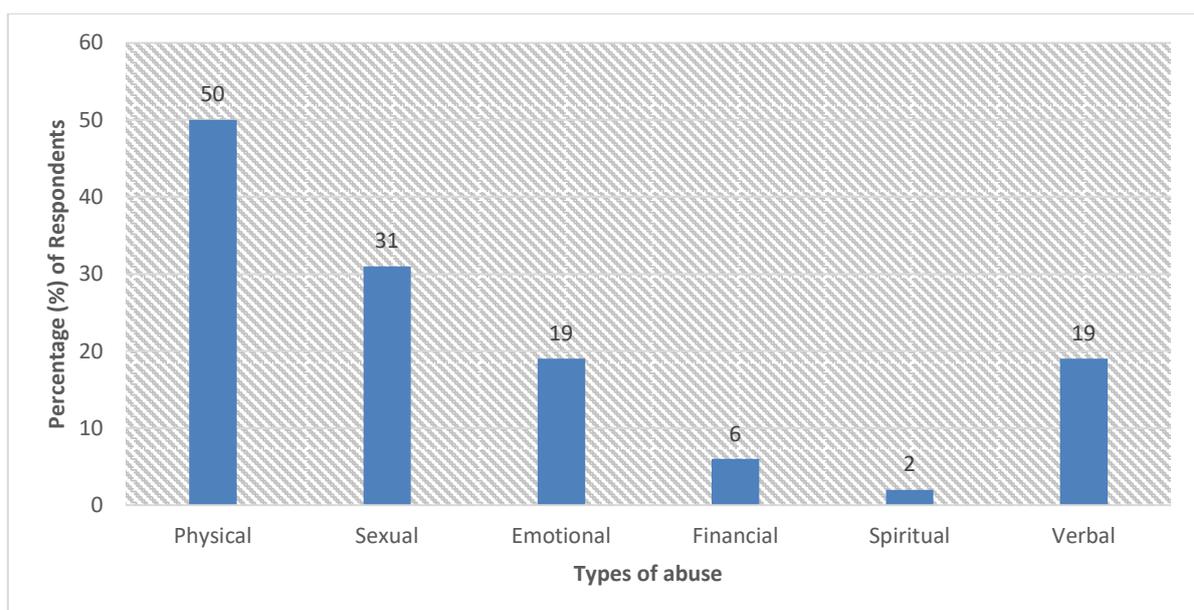
Question 3 asked how often students experienced domestic violence at their homes.

Question 4 gives different types of domestic violence experienced by students.



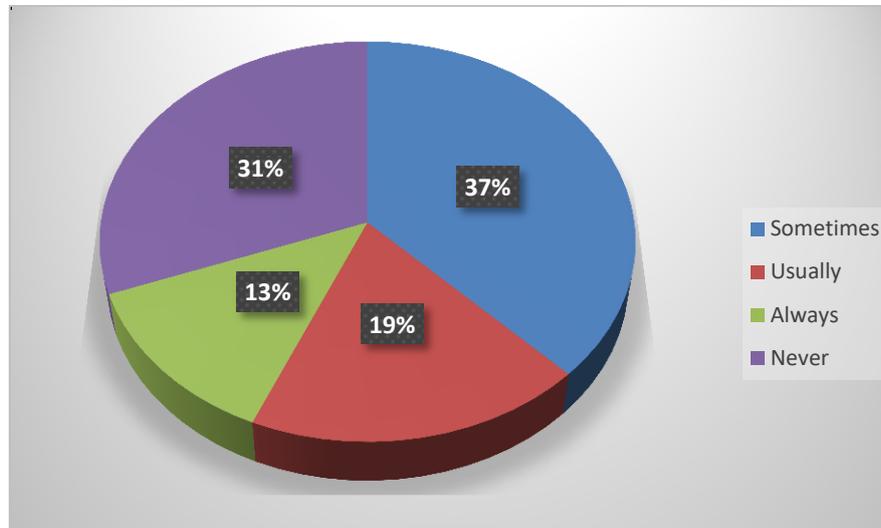
**Figure 2. Status of Respondents**

Fig. 2 shows the status of the respondents in terms of domestic violence as a phenomena around them. Majority of the respondents that is 56% are friends or families of the victims of domestic violence. It was interesting to note from the study that 19 % of the respondents are currently the victims of domestic violence while another 19% had previously been a victim but now have come out of the situation to label themselves as abuse survivors. 6% are professionals who are community or social workers who play vital role in reducing domestic violence from their community.



**Figure 3. Types of Abuses**

Fig. 3 shows the types of abuses the respondent or someone known to the respondent are currently experiencing. 50% of the respondents have mentioned physical abuse as the most common one while 31% have opined sexual abuse, 19 % for emotional abuse and another 19% for verbal abuse. The least opined were financial abuse 6% and spiritual abuse 2%.



**Figure 4. Respondents Experiences of Domestic Violence**

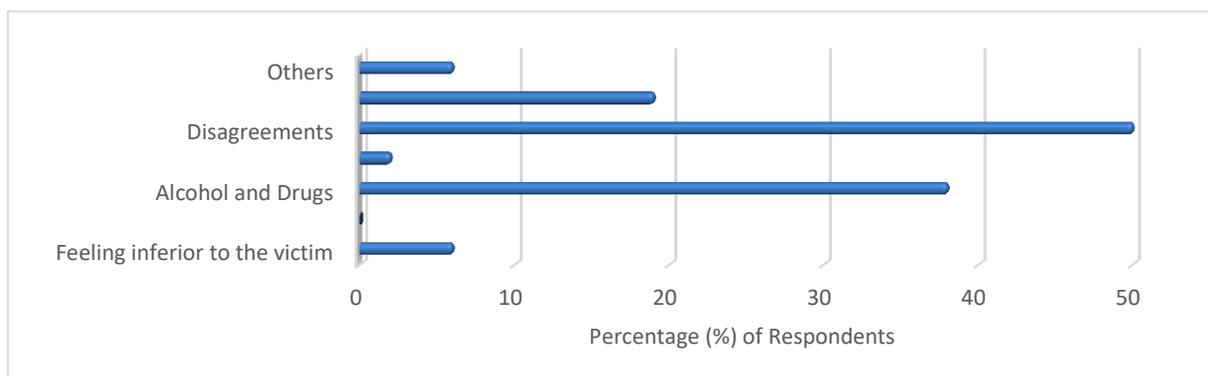
Fig. 4 shows the percentage of respondents who usually, sometimes, never and always experienced domestic violence at their homes. Majority of the respondents 37% mentioned that they sometimes experience domestic violence at home, while 19% said usually while 13% said they are always a victim of domestic violence. 31% respondents mentioned that they have never experienced domestic violence at home.

**Table 1. Types of Domestic Violence Experienced**

Types of Domestic violence	Percentage (%) of Respondents
Forced sexual act / Withhold sexual act	38%
Pushing, punching, kicking or pulling hair	56%
Derogatory comments	38%
Cease financial support	0%
Others	6%

Tab 1 shows the percentage of respondents who face various forms of violence at home. 56% opined that they experienced pushing, punching, kicking and hair pulling in their homes. 38 % mentioned that they are either forced into sexual acts or withheld of sexual acts in their home. Another 38% stated that derogatory comments are passed to them at home. 6% mentioned other forms of violence such as unfair treatment and emotional abuse.

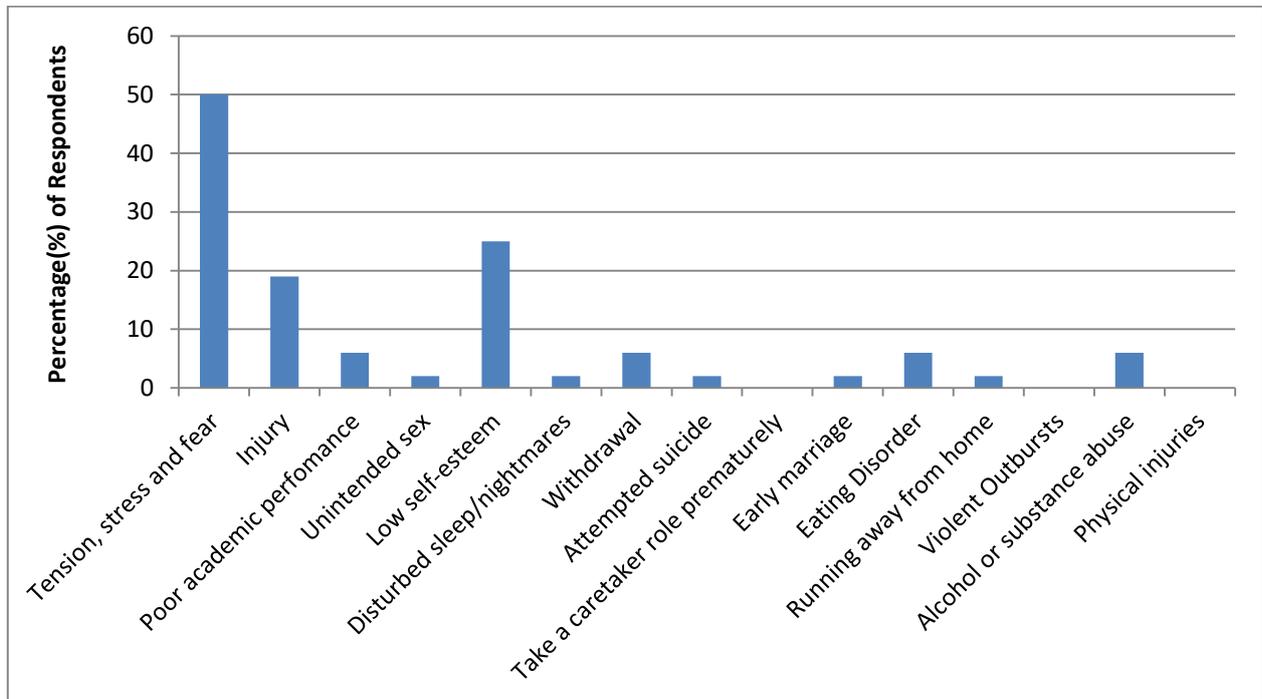
**4.2 Research question 2: The Reasons or Causes of Domestic Violence**



**Figure 5. Major Causes of Domestic Violence**

Fig. 5 shows the reasons or the causes of domestic violence. The reasons or factors that lead to domestic violence observed by the respondents are Financial Issues with the percentage of 19, Outside Affairs (2%), Alcohol and drugs (38%) which is the second highest causes of domestic violence, Feeling inferior to the victim (6%), others (6%) and Disagreements which has the highest percentage (50%). This shows that disagreements are the main reason conflict arises and may lead to serious issues such as domestic violence.

#### 4.3 Research question 3. The Effects of Domestic Violence on Students



**Figure 6. Effects of Domestic Violence on Students**

Fig. 5 shows the effects of domestic violence on the respondents as students. The highest 50% go through stress, tension and fear while 25% have low self-esteem, students with injuries (19%), students with poor academic performances, eating disorder, alcohol/subsistence abuse are 6% including students who used to withdraw from classes. Only 2% of students have experienced nightmares and disturbance in their sleep. Also 2% of students have attempted suicide, including students with unintended sex and students who have married at an early age just to escape from problem experienced at their homes.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Domestic violence is therefore an act of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. If a person makes physical contact with his or her partner in an aggressive manner then thus he or she is committing violence against his or her partner. This may cause a serious problem such as major injuries due to fighting or eventually death, and this is when the victim of domestic violence may receive such penalties such as going to prison or be charged with large amount of fine in order to escape imprisonment. Globally most females or women are the ones who usually suffers from domestic violence since they are being treated with low status and no respect by their spouse or family members, however nowadays people including most organizations in the world are trying to solve the situation or problems by giving out important talks and awareness on human rights and equality of all men both males and females.

The results from the study reveals that most students at the University of Fiji have declared that they have been facing problems such as tension, stress and fear, self-low esteem and injuries that might due to a serious conflict. It was also observed that most victims involved in domestic violence are females as supported by the past research report on Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC) which states that Fiji is one of the highest rates of domestic violence in the world. However, FWCC claims that "64% of women who have ever been in an intimate relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a husband or intimate partner in their lifetime which also proves similarly to our results that

60% of females at the University of Fiji has experienced physical abuse plus 31% who have experienced sexual abuse at their individual homes. This compares to an estimated global prevalence for physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence over a woman's lifetime of 30%. In Fiji, 24% of women are suffering from physical or sexual partner violence today. Also every day, 43 women are injured, 1 is permanently disabled, and 71 lose consciousness in Fiji" which shows that women in Fiji are currently facing domestic violence every day and this may result in a massive number of injured women. (New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2013). In most sites, they found that 30% to 60% of women had been the victims of domestic abuse; the absolute range was from 15% to 71%, with physical and sexual violence being the most common. They determined that domestic violence against women is common across the world, that women are more likely to be abused by a partner than by an unknown perpetrator, and that a large amount of domestic abuse is considered to be severe and frequent (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006). This is supported by our research that most women in Fiji are more likely to be affected by domestic violence than males as is also shown in our collected results from students in University of Fiji. According to the pie chart most students have experience domestic violence while only 31% of students have not yet been involved or experienced domestic violence. This shows that currently most students are suffering from problems of domestic violence including abuses, and physical injuries.

In this research however we have been able to identify the types of violence experienced by students in University of Fiji which shows that most females are the victims who mostly experienced forced sexual abuse and physical abuse at their homes. The result also proves that Students cannot perform well in their studies due to disturbance at their homes that may result from family problems that has become a serious issue since these can put stress, tension and fear on students or children. To fight domestic violence let us quit fighting and end disagreements including treating others with equal right and respect as well as to understand the rights of others.

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