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**Domestic Violence and Environmental Factors on Academic Performance of Senior  
Secondary School Students in Lagos State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

This study examined domestic violence and environmental factors on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Surulere Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. To guide the study, four hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The descriptive survey research design was used in the study and two instruments were used in this study namely; a self-designed questionnaire titled “Domestic Violence and Environmental Factors on Students’ Academic Performance Questionnaire (DVEFSAPQ)”, and achievement test on English Language to measure academic performance. The instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.76 when tested during the pilot study. The achievement test on English Language consists of 20 items. One hundred and twenty (120) students were selected as sample size for this study using the stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Independent t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical tools were used for the hypotheses formulated. Findings from the study showed that there is a significant relationship between domestic violence and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Lagos State, there is a significant relationship between domestic violence and students’ school attendance in senior secondary schools in Lagos State, there is a significant relationship between parental motivation and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Lagos State and there is a significant influence of family size on

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academic performance of senior secondary school students in Lagos State. Based on the findings of the study, the study recommended among others that teachers should be equipped with the skills of identifying and manage students who are emotionally, cognitively and socially affected by domestic violence. Also, government should enact laws and empowered courts to deal with cases of domestic violence and punish the culprits.

**Keywords:** *Academic Performance, Domestic Violence, Family Size, Parental Motivation, Physical Abuse*

## **Background to the Study**

Students' school participation as seen in attendance, performance and class participation is related to their psychological and physical state which in turn could be influenced by family relations including domestic violence. Domestic violence is almost always accompanied by psychological abuse and in many cases by forced sex as well (Stren & Zevon, 2018). Although the family is a place where people are expected to maintain intimacy and experience greater emotional support in their relationship, domestic violence presents itself as a paradox. It is ironical that this very supportive social unit is also the arena where intimate partner violence (IPV) is more often experienced. Children from slum areas, who witness violence between their parents on top of other social challenges, are exposed to the aftermath of domestic violence such as anxiety, depression, poor academic performance, low self-esteem, disobedience, nightmares and physical health deterioration, all of which may negatively impinge on their academic performance and school participation (Plunkett, Radmacher & Moll-Phanara, 2019). The extent and magnitude of domestic violence cannot be precisely measured because there are many cases whereby victims fail to report thus making this vice an inter-personal and family secret. Violence between spouses or intimate partner violence (IPV) tend to usually has far reaching consequences on children. Besides the scenes of violence being traumatic, the children may suffer short-term as well as long-term emotional imbalances, which may not only affect their behaviour and performance in schools, but also adversely affect their social and inter-personal relationships. These children may then end up being abusers themselves in what can be seen as continuity hypothesis. Children who witness violence between their parents likely develop many of the same behavioural and psychological problems as children who are themselves abused.

Academic performance is an important parameter in measuring success in students. The concept of academic performance is inevitable in any formal educational institution. It expresses the learning achievement of an individual or a group at the end of an academic programme. It is a criterion for ascertaining the capabilities of students from which their potentials could be assimilated, retained, recalled and communicate their knowledge of what has been learnt (Joe, Kpolovie, Osonwa & Iderima, 2018). Academic performance is a demonstrated achievement as knowledge attained or skills developed in school subject usually designed by test scores or marks

assigned by the teacher or both. Meanwhile, poor academic performances of secondary school students may have been affected by many factors which domestic violence could be among.

The domestic violence is such a factor which is the foundation for children's development, as such in terms of family problems, family's socio-economic status plays a vital role in educational achievements of the students. The home has a great influence on the child's psychological, emotional, social and economic state. This is because the domestic violence in context to the child's performance affects his reaction to life situations and his level of academic performance. Dutton (2017) defines physical abuse as part of domestic violence, is seen as any behaviour that involves the intentional use of force against the body of another person that risks physical injury, harm and or pain. It includes pushing, hitting, slapping, choking, using an object to hit, twisting of a body, forcing the ingestion of an unwanted substance and use of a weapon. He further sees sexual abuse as form of domestic violence defines it as any unwanted sexual intimacy forced on an individual by another. It may include oral, anal or vaginal stimulation or penetration, forced nudity, forced exposure to sexually explicit material or activity. Compliance may be obtained through actual or threatened physical force or through some other form of coercion.

Domestic violence is threatening many Nigerian families and is drastically increasing in our society. Many people, the vast majority of them children have been injured, disabled and killed as a result of domestic violence. Following the recent happenings where domestic violence has become a menace that needs to be addressed as soon as possible and accorded with all seriousness that it deserves. It was further noted that domestic violence does not recognize social classes or educational standards (Wopadovi, 2018). Domestic violence is assuming national and international attention and it is a type of violence that is prevalent in many homes, and the world over. It is a form of defilement, assault, sexual harassment, and rape or battering, child abuse, for example denial of right, necessities and opportunities, threatening patterns of communication such as insults, harassment, neglectful lack of action. Domestic violence has been outlined by Amnesty international as most violent attacks on an individual or group of people or women. It involves physical, sexual and psychological violence in the family including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to any member of the household.

The family is the cradle of the child developmental and socialization processes. This explains the role of the family in programming the child's basic life skills, social emotional, intellectual, communication and collaborative skills (Singh, 2017). Dutton (2017) sees family as a primary group which requires people who are intimate and have frequent face-to-face contact with one another; have norm and expectation on how members of the family should behave. The education received by a child from parents and significant others at home, is most likely to have a high significant and dominant effects on the behaviour of the child later in life. What the child learns at home and how his/her family motivates him/her towards education, contributes to the child's academic achievement in school. It is against this background that this study examined domestic violence and environmental factors on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria.

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were postulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between domestic violence and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Lagos State.
2. There is no significant relationship between domestic violence and students' school attendance in senior secondary schools in Lagos State.
3. There is no significant relationship between parental motivation and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Lagos State.
4. There is no significant influence of family size on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Lagos State.

### **Methodology**

The descriptive research survey design was used in this study. A descriptive research design is one which involves the collection of data from members of a population in order to determine the current status in that population with respect to one or more variables. The justification for its use lies in the nature of the variables involved in the research. The respondents' opinions and attitudes were surveyed and the results obtained consequently assisted in the data analysis. The study was carried out in Surulere Local Government Area of Lagos State. Surulere Local Government Area is one of the 20 Local Government Areas in Lagos State, Nigeria. Surulere Local Government

Area is one of the most densely populated Local Government Areas of Lagos State. It is about 633N and 325 while its distance from central Lagos is about 8km<sup>2</sup>. With an area of about 278square kilometers, the Local Government is bounded in the North by Mushin Local Government and in the East by Mainland Local Government Areas. Surulere simply means, “*Patience is Golden*”.

The population of this study comprised all students in public senior secondary schools located in Surulere Local Government Area of Lagos State. However, the target population of the study comprised SS II students. SS II students were considered most appropriate for the study because they were in the second terminal class in senior school, that prepares them towards their senior secondary school certificate examination and were not burdened with the pressure of preparing for external examinations. One hundred and twenty (120) students were selected as sample size for this study using the stratified sampling technique to select four schools. Stratified sampling technique was used because is a method of selecting participants in their natural strata, for example, gender, age and class arm. The sample size comprised males and females SS II students located in the local government area under study. The students were chosen from four schools out of the twenty public senior secondary schools in Surulere Local Government. Simple random sampling technique was employed in the selection of the schools for this study. This involved the use of balloting method to select the samples. The names of the public senior secondary schools in the area of study were written on pieces of papers and folded, while a neutral person was called upon to pick the numbers at random until the expected number (4) are completed. Furthermore, thirty (30) students were selected using simple random sampling technique through hat and draw method from each of the four schools making a total of 120 respondents represented the entire population.

### **Instrumentation**

Two research instruments were used in this study. They were self-designed questionnaire and achievement test on English language. The self-designed questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire was researcher made questionnaire titled “**Domestic Violence and Environmental Factors on Students’ Academic Performance Questionnaire (DVEFSAPQ)**”. The questionnaire had 2 sections: Sections A and B. Section A contains the bio-data of the respondents such as gender, age and class arms of study. Section ‘B’ contains items that measured the variables of the study. This enabled the researcher to test the hypotheses

formulated in the study. The statement constructed under Section ‘B’ of the questionnaire adopt 4-point likert scale of ‘Strongly Agree’, ‘Agree’, ‘Disagree’ and ‘Strongly Disagree’. Achievements test on English language prepared by the researcher measured the dependent variable (academic performance). The achievement test on English Language consists of 20 items. In order to ensure the validity of the instruments, the instruments were submitted to the expert in Measurement and Evaluation who screened and approved it for use in this study. For the reliability of the instruments, a pilot study was conducted using test retest on 20 senior secondary two (SS II) students in another school which was not included in the main study, specifically, from Somolu Local Government Area of Lagos State. Twenty (20) instruments were administered on the twenty students for the pilot study. After 2 weeks, the same instruments were administered on the same group of students. The Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to measure the reliability of the instrument and the coefficient value 0.76 was obtained which was used to judge the instrument reliable for use in the study. The descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentage table were used to analyse the demographic data. The formulated hypotheses were tested using t-test statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

### Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis one: There is no significant relationship between domestic violence and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Lagos State.

**Table 1:**

**Relationship between domestic violence and academic performance of senior secondary school students**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	r-cal.	r-crit.	Sig. Value	Decision
Domestic Violence		13.48	3.62					
	120			118	0.66	0.195	0.05	<b>H<sub>01</sub></b>
Academic performance		13.00	3.28					<b>Rejected</b>

From Table 1, the calculated r-value of 0.66 indicated a positive relationship between domestic violence and academic performance of senior secondary school students. That is, the two variables

are positively correlated. Moreover, the calculated r-value of 0.66 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.195 given 118 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between domestic violence and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Lagos State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between domestic violence and students' school attendance in senior secondary schools in Lagos State.

**Table 2: Relationship between domestic violence and students' school attendance in senior secondary schools**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	r-cal.	r-crit.	Sig. Value	Decision
Domestic Violence		13.48	3.62					
	120			118	0.73	0.195	0.05	<b>H<sub>02</sub></b>
School Attendance		14.32	3.81					<b>Rejected</b>

From Table 2, the calculated r-value of 0.73 indicated a positive relationship between domestic violence and students' school attendance in senior secondary schools. That is, the two variables are positively correlated. Moreover, the calculated r-value of 0.73 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.195 given 118 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected. This shows that there is a significant relationship between domestic violence and students' school attendance in senior secondary schools in Lagos State.

Hypothesis three: There is no significant relationship between parental motivation and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Lagos State.

**Table 3: Relationship between parental motivation and academic performance of senior secondary school students**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	r-cal.	r-crit.	Sig. Value	Decision
Parental Motivation		15.21	3.91					
	120			118	0.78	0.195	0.05	<b>H<sub>03</sub></b>
Academic performance		13.00	3.28					<b>Rejected</b>

From Table 3, the calculated r-value of 0.78 indicated a positive relationship between parental motivation and academic performance of senior secondary school students. That is, the two variables are positively correlated. Moreover, the calculated r-value of 0.78 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.195 given 118 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between parental motivation and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Lagos State.

Hypothesis four: There is no significant influence of family size on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Lagos State.

**Table 4: Influence of family size on academic performance of senior secondary school students**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-calc	t-tab
Family Size	120	14.87	3.58			
Academic Performance	120	13.00	3.28	118	4.47	1.98

Tabulated value of t at 0.05

Table 4 indicates that the value of  $t_{(cal)}$  of independent sample t-test was calculated to be 4.47, which is significant in the light of the fact that is greater than tabulated  $t_{(tab)}$  value of 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance given 118 degrees of freedom. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. The results revealed that there is a significant influence of family size on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Lagos State.

### Discussion of Findings

The results of this study were discussed based on the results of the hypotheses tested. Hypothesis one was rejected as the result of the findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between domestic violence and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Lagos State. This finding supports Pynoos and Eth (2018) who opined that domestic violence has many impacts on children's education. Children's Experience of violence affects their school adaptation and academic success. Exposure to violence (i.e. children's experience) affects

children's view of the world and themselves, and their moral development. Domestic violence exposure creates a highly stressful environment for youngsters. Such environment may lead to posttraumatic stress symptom, including altered psychological, biological, neurological and cognitive functioning. Also, Plunkett, Radmacher and Moll-Phanara (2019) found that, children exposed to domestic violence may show difficulties with school work and would have poor academic performance, school phobia and difficulties in concentration and attention. Sharma, Basad and Gupta (2015) also opined that children exposed to domestic and community violence always show slower school achievement, score lower than the non-abused children on tests of verbal ability; comprehension, reading and math skills and consequently, this may disrupt children's successful functioning in the school which finally affect their academic performance.

Hypothesis two was rejected as the result of the findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between domestic violence and students' school attendance in senior secondary schools in Lagos State. This finding is in line with Madhurira (2016) who concluded that hours spent at work had a negative impact on education variables, with the marginal impact weakening at the higher levels of work hours. The result also corroborated with the study carried out by Rhodes and Levinson (2016) who found that poor school attendance was caused by the requirements parents place on children to be economically active which resulted in the children going to school late or having interruptions in their schooling because of seasonal agricultural activities. The significant effect of domestic violence may be because these children, who combine work with schooling, seem suffer fatigue and stress which may cause irregular school attendance especially for those that hawk before going to school and those that work late at night. Again, even when they attend school, they seem not to be actively participating in school activities.

Hypothesis three was rejected as the result of the findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between parental motivation and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Lagos State. This finding is in line with Akpan (2016) who stated that parents are noted for both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation through external factors as opposed to the internal drives of intrinsic motivation. These parents provide tangible rewards to their children, which in turn boost their academic achievements. These parents also motivate their children through intrinsic motivation by internal factors as opposed to external drives or extrinsic motivation. Ojo and Yilma

(2015) also stated that other support of the parents lies in the responsibility of training a child. Ojo and Yilma (2015) further indicated that families, who were involved in their children's education through homework, monitor their performance in school and ask questions have their children achieve success in school. In the same vein, Schneider and Lee (2017) asserted that all parents have desired to do something better for their children according to their available resources, but the extent and effectiveness of parental guidance depends on a variety of reasons, such as, ethnicity, family income, and home environment and their awareness about the importance of education.

Hypothesis four was rejected as the result of the findings revealed that there is a significant influence of family size on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Lagos State. This finding supports Eristwhistle (2016) who found that, children with relatively small size families performed better in verbal and non-verbal tests, than children from large family size in the same test. This according to him is because children from large families have less frequent interactions with adults. Similarly, parental attention by parents declines as the number of sibling's increases and latter born children perform less well than their earlier born siblings. Also, Akpan (2016) posited that large family is not ideal in language development because parents may not be able to interact with many children all at once. Children from smaller families tend to receive more attention from their parents than those from larger homes. This can result in better school success (Eamon, 2015). Nsibiet (2018) has shown that the environment of a large family constitutes a handicap to the verbal development, consequently to general mental development.

## **Conclusion**

Exposure of children to domestic violence could have a negative effect on their behaviour and academic achievement. Other effects include; aggressive behaviours, in sensitivity to the pain and suffering of others and increased fearfulness of the world around which consequently disrupt their academic competence and school adaptation. Based on the findings of the research, the following conclusions have been drawn: a significant relationship exists between domestic violence and academic performance of senior secondary school students, a significant relationship exists between domestic violence and students' school attendance in senior secondary schools, a significant relationship exists between parental motivation and academic performance of senior secondary school students, there is a significant influence of family size on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Lagos State.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers should be equipped with the skills of identifying students or children that are emotionally, cognitively and socially affected by domestic violence, and find ways of correcting the situation.
2. Government should enact laws and empowered courts to deal with cases of domestic violence and punish the culprits.
3. Workshops, seminars, and sensitisation campaigns should be mounted to educate parents, children and community members on their rights and obligations as per as marriage, cohabitation, dating and relationships are concerned.
4. Children should be motivated, advised and their behaviours should be modified on how to manage and overcome all problems associated with domestic violence so as to achieve success in their academic pursuit.

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