

# Perceived Influence of Family Violence on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Benue State, Nigeria: Counselling Implications

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**Abstract** - The study investigated perceived influence of family violence on academic performance of secondary school students in Benue State, Nigeria. Indices of family violence in this study are Physical and sexual violence. Two research questions were raised and two hypotheses guided the study. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 75, 969 secondary school students in 290 public secondary schools in 23 local government areas in Benue State. The sample size was 398 secondary school students. Multi-stage sampling was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: *Perceived Influence of Family Violence on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students Questionnaire* “(PIFVAPSSSQ). The instrument was made up of 28 items, which elicited responses on the variables of the study from the respondents. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions; while Chi-square of goodness was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. It was found that family violence has significant influence on academic performance of secondary school students in Benue State. The researcher concluded based on the findings of the study that family violence influence the academic performance of secondary students in Benue State. It was therefore recommended that the availability of guidance and counselling units should be a prerequisite to establishing secondary schools.

## I. INTRODUCTION

A family is a group of individuals who are related by either marriage, birth, adoption who are either dwelling together or not. It is considered as nuclear family when it consists of father, mother and children. It is also considered as extended family when it involve other extended relatives such as grandparents, in laws and many others who are considered as a unit. As an ideal family, it holds the responsibility of providing love, support and stability to its members. The family as one of the major agents of socialization is essential for the development of children. It is considered as the first institution where children derive some form of behavioural patterns

based on the existence of interaction within members at their early stages of life. In a normal situation, family members display sense of loyalty, love, and genuine respect, care and concern for others; while in an abnormal situation family members disagree with one another. This in some cases can lead to family violence.

Violence is the exhibition of abnormal behaviour which particularly indicates use of physical force to control others. When this act is displayed in a family setting, it is considered as family violence. It has the capacity to hurt, damage and could even result to killing a member or members of the family when perpetrated.

Family violence is one of the negative practices that mostly happen in households, where members of the family display high rate of disagreement. Family violence has received an increasing rate of concern from the media in recent years (Apeh and Eli, 2020). Further added that it is globally estimated that up to 1 billion children aged 2-17 years have experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence or neglect in the past years. This is a clear indication that family violence is rampantly practiced. The authors added that families do have conflict but some families may occasionally resolve these conflicts inappropriately. That means some family members sometimes lose their tempers, voice out intentionally painful words to one another and even engage in physical combat and may refuse to live in greeting terms.

Family violence is found in cultures with family structures ranging from nuclear to extended families. It is considered as a problem that involves the father, mother, children, siblings, and elderly ones, among others who are all members of the family. Family violence is capable of causing physical and psychological destruction of human development. Shamiya and Daniel (2019) asserted that children who are victims or witnesses of family violence may

develop physical, psychological and behavioural problems capable of affecting their participation in school. This is because they may be too scared to learn and a good number of them may lag behind in class. Kanchinputu and Mwele (2016) state that family violence is a bad practice which can affect children's academic life by leaving them with a sense of vulnerability, hopelessness, psychological disorders and emotional threats. To Adamu (2016), family violence may reduce a child's attentiveness in class lesson as it is accompanied with emotional trauma. Children who experience higher level of violence have lower ability in reading, mathematics, and general knowledge Valerie (2013). Several efforts are made by national and international bodies in combating family violence. Philip and Marioson (2016) affirmed that the United Nations signed a chapter aimed at protecting children's right in 1989 and it is called the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child, African Countries also took an initiative in protecting children rights with the African Chapter on the Rights and welfare of the child (OAU) in 1990. Condemnation of family violence may be as a result of its negative impact on humanity which poor academic performance of secondary school students may not be an exception.

Generally, academic performance of students is the extent to which a student, teacher, or institution of learning has attained their short term goals. Specifically, academic performance of a student is the extent to which the results of the student from numerous school activities such as end of lesson test, take home assignments, terminal examination, and end of term examination are assessed and are rated in numerical value (marks). It is considered as students observed efforts in the angle of learning activities assessed at a given duration which are not subject to certification. Academic performance according to Abaidoo (2018) is a measurable and observable behaviour of a student within a specific period. He added that it consists of scores obtained by a student in an assessment such as class exercise, class test, mid-semester, mock examination, and end of semester examination. Idris, Hassan, Ya'acob Gill and Awal (2012) opined that successful academic performed students have higher self-esteem and self-confidence, lower level of anxiety and depression, socially inclined and are likely not to engage in substance intake. With consideration to factors capable of causing poor academic performance of secondary school students, family violence may also

project negative traits capable of hindering good academic performance. It is therefore important that the researcher ascertains if the different types of family violence has influence on academic performance of secondary school students.

One of types of family violence to be considered in this work is family physical violence. This is referred to intentional use of physical force against any family member. It involve oppressive act such as conscious use of force against the body of another person that could inflict physical injury, pain or harm. It include slapping, hitting, pushing, twisting of any part of the body, piercing, use of weapon on member of the family. Hatiz (2017) observed that long term consequences of physical violence on children include long-term disabilities; such as brain damage, eye damage, and ill interpersonal relationships; such as difficulty trusting others; which is a predisposition to emotional disturbance such as feelings of low self-esteem, depression, among others, which may result to poor performance in school. Apart from this form of family violence, another form of family violence to be considered is family sexual violence.

Family sexual violence is a situation where any of the family members is forced to participate in sexual activity against his or her wish. Jerom and Happiness (2020) affirmed that sexually abused persons are normally confused by retrieval clues that bring back memories of the abuse which makes them maladaptive. It is expected that most children who exhibited one form of behaviour or the other may carry such behaviours to school such as aggressiveness, disobedience, communication misconception, panic disorder, low self-esteem, bully attitude, drug abuse, depressed mode, and serious anxiety such children may not find meaning to life; hence may even play truancy and lukewarm interest to academic activities. Such students may even attempt early marriage, which can lead to school refusal and school drop-out. Family sexual violence may also lead to contacting of sexually transmitted disease, early unmarried pregnancy which may hamper educational learning of students. Pietro, Franceschini, Villain and Corsello (2019) consider intimidation of sexual nature, sexual harassment, unwanted touch, sexual coercing and rape as sexual violence. Such aspects of sexual violence practiced in a family is the researchers point of emphasis which he intends to ascertain if it has the

tendency to influence the academic performance of secondary school students.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Performance of secondary school students in education in Benue State may be considered effective when the students envisage total support of family members through the provision of a violence free home; this may pave-way for provision of love and affection which may give room for psychological or emotional adjustment among members including the child. Also, financial support by members of the family through provision of needed school requirements, including feeding as a basic need could all contribute to effective performance of secondary school students. However, presence of family violence in zone B according to Shamija and Daniel (2020), affects student's academic performance. A major concern in Benue State and in many other communities today is poor performance of students in schools. Students are expected to experience good learning environment and finally come out of school as complete educationally trained persons. However, students' academic performance in Benue State is still facing many challenges ranging from lack of adequate study materials, poor classroom response to teacher's instructions, poor attitude towards teaching and learning processes, projection of maladaptive behaviours of various kinds, lack of adequate socialization among students, poor students and teacher relationship and low self-esteem among learners among others. Many in the society today point accusing fingers on poor school facilities, poor government educational policies among others without giving attention to other factors such as family violence. The extent to which family violence affects individuals in life is astonishing; such as killing family members, injuring, divorcing of partners, stereotyping, isolating, among others is tempting enough for one to suspect if it could have influence on performance of students globally. It is in this regard that the researcher is motivated to investigate the influence of family violence on performance of secondary school students in Education in Benue State, Nigeria; Covering a larger scope beyond Shamija and Daniel's finding in Zone B.

### Objectives of The Study

The broad objective of the study is to investigate the perceived influence of family violence on academic

performance of secondary school students in Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, this study is designed to:

1. determine the perceived influence of family physical violence on academic performance of secondary school students in Benue State of Nigeria.
2. ascertain the perceived influence of family sexual violence on academic performance of secondary school students in Benue State of Nigeria.

### Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide this study

1. What is the perceived Influence of Family Physical Violence on academic performance of Secondary School Students in Benue State of Nigeria?
2. What is the perceived Influence of Family Sexual Violence on academic performance of Secondary School Students in Benue State of Nigeria?

### Hypotheses:

The following null hypotheses are formulated to guide the study and will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- 1 Family physical violence has no significant perceived influence on academic performance of secondary school students in Benue State of Nigeria.
- 2 Family sexual violence has no significant perceived influence on academic performance of secondary school students in Benue State of Nigeria.

## III. METHODOLOGY

The design of this study is a survey research design. Survey research according to Emaikwu (2019), is a type of research design that obtain data from a large number of subjects and make use of a representative sample of a given population. The area of the study is Benue State. Benue State is one of the states in North Central Nigeria. It was created in 1976 and has its capital in Makurdi. Benue state has a population of about 4,253,641 (2006 census). The population of this study is 75,969 secondary school students in 290 public secondary schools in 23 local government areas in Benue State of Nigeria. (Benue State Teaching Service Board 2023 /2024 annual census report). The sample size for the study was 398

students. This was drawn from the population of 75,969 using Yamane (1967) formula for Sample Size Determination. One instrument was used for this research work. The instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire titled “Perceived Influence of Family Violence on Academic Performance of Secondary School Student’s Questionnaire” (PIFVAPSSSQ). The questionnaire consist of 14 items designed on a continuum of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts. The overall reliability estimate obtained was 0.84 which shows that the instrument can be used for the study. The method of data collection used in this study was the direct contact method. The data

collected from students were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer all the four research questions. Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) goodness of fit was used for testing the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

#### IV. RESULTS

The results of the study are presented according to research questions answered and hypotheses tested as follows:

4.1.1 Research Question 1: What is the perceived influence of Family Physical Violence on Academic Performance of Secondary School students in Benue State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation of Responses of Secondary School Students on perceived influence of Family Physical Violence on Academic Performance of Secondary School students in Benue State.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Remarks
1.	Fighting among members of the family influence students’ academic performance.	324	68	6	0	3.80	.437	Agreed
2.	Children that are injured by family member (s) may not pay attention to what the teacher is teaching in the class.	151	236	8	3	3.34	.559	Agreed
3.	Family physical violence creates anxiety (fear) in students which can lead to poor class attendance.	188	202	7	1	3.46	.546	Agreed
4.	Children who witness family physical violence may consider themselves not being accepted among their school mates, so may not share their idea in the class during learning.	219	171	8	0	3.53	.539	Agreed
5.	Children who are exposed to family physical violence create noise in class by fighting school mates.	244	143	10	1	3.58	.556	Agreed
6.	Family physical violence creates anxiety (fear) which can on students lead to poor class participation.	246	140	11	1	3.59	.560	Agreed
7.	Children who see their family members fighting becomes worried and would always want to be lonely so it affects their group assignment	250	133	14	1	3.59	.573	Agreed
	Grand Mean					3.56		Agreed

Mean Score < than 2.50 = Disagreed, Mean Score > or = 2.50 = Agreed N = 398

Table 1 revealed that all the seven items have their mean and standard deviation (S.D) range from 3.46 – 3.8 and 0.437 – 0.573 while the cluster mean is 3.56. The perceived influence of family physical violence on academic performance is very high.

4.1.2 Research Question 2

What is the Perceived Influence of Family Sexual Violence on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Benue State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of Secondary School Students on Perceived Influence of Family Sexual Violence on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Benue State.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Remarks
8.	Rap of children by family members may influence students' academic performance.	308	79	10	1	3.74	.507	Agree
9.	Sexually abused students in the family experience low grades in class.	173	214	10	1	3.40	.554	Agreed
10.	Sexually assaulted children develop ill health issues capable of influencing their academic performance	260	130	7	1	3.63	.533	Agreed
11.	Having sex with children within members of the family can lead to pregnancy which can affect student's school attendance	255	135	7	1	3.62	.536	Agreed
12.	Unwanted sexual touching of children among members of the family develops fear in children which can then influence their listening skills	267	116	12	3	3.63	.584	Agreed
13.	Having sex with children within members of the family can lead to contact of sexually transmitted disease which can influence their academic performance	269	112	13	4	3.62	.601	Agreed
14.	Sex with students among members of the family can make students play truancy in school.	261	116	14	7	3.59	.648	Agreed
	Grand Mean					3.60		Agreed

Mean Score < than 2.50 = Disagreed, Mean Score > or = 2.50 = Agreed, N = 398

Table 2 revealed that all the seven items have their mean and S.D range from 3.40 – 3.74 and 0.507 – 0.648 while the cluster mean is 3.60. The perceived influence of family sexual violence on academic performance is very high.

#### Research Hypothesis 1

Family Physical Violence has no Significant Influence on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Benue State.

Table 3: Chi-square goodness of fit on Perceived Influence of Family Physical Violence on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Benue State.

	Observed N	Expected N	Df	Chi-Square	Asymp-Sig	Sig-Value	Remark
Strongly Agree	1622	107.2	2.7	371.1	.000	0.05	Significant
Agree	1093						
Disagree	64						
Strongly Disagree	7						

Total = (2,791 ÷ 7) = 398

P < 0.05

Table 3 revealed that  $\chi^2$  value of 371.4 at df. P (sig) 0.000 and  $\alpha$  is 0.05. Since  $P < 0.05$ , the hypothesis of no significant difference is rejected. This implies that, physical family violence has significant influence on academic performance of secondary

school students in Benue State. (Find attached in Appendix (G) for SPSS Data analysis hardcopies)

#### Research Hypothesis 2

Family Sexual Violence has no Significant Influence on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Benue State.

Table 4: Chi-square goodness of fit on Perceived Influence of Family Sexual Violence on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Benue State?

	Observed N	Expected N	Df	Chi-Square	Asymp-Sig	Sig- Value	Remarks
Strongly Agree	1793	99.5	3	458.7	.000	0.05	Significant
Agree	902						
Disagree	73						
Strongly Disagree	18						

Total =  $(2,786 \div 7) = 398$

$P < 0.05$

Table 4 revealed that  $\chi^2$  value of 458.7 at df - P (sig) 0.000 and  $\alpha$  is 0.05. Since  $P < 0.05$ , the hypothesis of no significant difference is rejected. This implies that, sexual family violence has significant influence on academic performance of secondary school students in Benue State.

## V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

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

Family physical violence has perceived significant influence on students' academic performance and the hypothesis of no significant influence was rejected. The finding is in agreement with Philip and Mwala (2016), whose study revealed that family physical violence have significant influence on students' academic performance. This may be as a result of low self-esteem developed by students. The finding is also in consonant with Mohammed and Jabber (2023), whose study revealed that family physical violence have significant influence on academic performance of secondary school students as it impacts students ability to pay attention and concentrate in the class. This could be as a result of students ill-health while being battered.

Family sexual violence has perceived significant influence on students' academic performance and the hypothesis of no significant influence was rejected. The finding is in agreement with karanji (2019), whose study revealed that family sexual violence negatively influence students' academic performance by leaving victims with ill health, pregnancy and absenteeism.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The researcher concluded based on the findings of this study that family violence influence the academic performance of secondary school students in Benue State, especially in aspects of family

physical, sexual, economical and psychological violence.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

- 1: Guidance and counselling unites should be made compulsory in all secondary school to provide guidance and counselling services to the existing victims in secondary schools.
- 2: Group counselling should be provided during Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings where parents, guidance, students, teachers and other school administrators would be informed on the influence family violence has on academic performance of students so that clients will see the need to adjust in order to avoid the effects it has on students' academic performance.

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