

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOURS AMONG ADOLESCENT STUDENTS IN THE SOUTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT: Domestic violence has proven to have profound negative effects, particularly on those living within homes and communities where violence is a dominant feature. The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of Domestic violence on adolescents' development of anti-social behaviors. The Ex-post-facto design employing both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection was used in the study. A sample size of this study was made up of 150 respondents (125 adolescents, and 10 parents. This study had two categories of respondents involving: adolescents and parents/guardians of children who had experience any form of violence. Convenient sampling was used to select adolescents while the snowball technique was used to supplement convenient sampling to sample parents. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire for adolescents and an interview guide for parents was used in data. A checklist was also developed by the researcher which had screening questions about 38 offenses against youth that cover five general areas of concern: (1) Conventional Crime, (2) Child Maltreatment, (3) Peer and Sibling Victimization, (4) Sexual Victimization, and (5) Witnessing and Indirect Victimization. Findings revealed that, there was a significant influence of domestic violence on development of aggressive behavioral patterns among adolescents was appraised using the Logistic Regression Model. The variability explained by this model was significant in the context within the nuclear home (Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficient: $\chi^2=16.256$; $P=0.012$), and within the extended family context (Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficient: $\chi^2=14.486$; $P=0.042$) and when combining the two contexts (Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficient: $\chi^2=24.068$; $P=0.028$). The Explanatory Power (EP) / Predictive Power was 14.6% (Cox & Snell R Square=0.146) within the nuclear home, slightly higher with a value of 15.6% (Cox & Snell R Square=0.156) obtained within the extended family context while the combined effect of both context (IVM) had the highest Explanatory Power of 23.1% (Cox & Snell R Square=0.231). Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that better policy should be developed to effectively regulate violence.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Development, Anti-Social Behaviors, and Adolescents.

1. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM

Violence has probably always been part of the human experience. Its impact can be seen, in various forms, in all parts of the world. Each year, more than a million people lose their lives, and many more suffer non-fatal injuries, as a result of self-inflicted, interpersonal or collective violence. Overall, violence is among the leading causes of death worldwide for people aged 15 to 44 years. In much of the rest of the world, violence and vulnerability are central themes in explaining historical change.

This article focuses on effect of domestic violence on the development of anti-social behaviors such as aggressive behavioral patterns, Social withdrawal behaviors, and street crimes among adolescents. Domestic violence within this study reflect contextual impunities on individuals while anti-social behaviors are individuals' responses in terms of exhibiting internalized anger and depression. A student's experience of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking impacts not only the student, but also the student's family, classmates and entire community.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that, adolescents in the South West Region of Cameroon are increasingly exhibiting anti-social behaviors in terms of aggressive behavioral patterns, Social withdrawal behaviors and involvement in street crimes. They are constantly battling to understand themselves and adhere to cultural values which are sometimes hampered by some negative external influences not limited to domestic violence, sexual abuse and arts of war. In the midst of such acts of violence, adolescents

internalize anger and hate which in turn build negative impressions in the minds often externalized through aggression, withdrawal, gangsterism among others. As a focus, the study contends that domestic violence, sexual abuse and arts of war could have damaging consequences on their behavioral patterns of adolescents through psychological trauma, family disruption, loss of potential, diminished quality of life, social disruption, economic loss, mortality, morbidity etc. The potential of being victimized could be higher for some adolescents than others, but every adolescent is at risk. Considering that the social, economic and psychological burden created by the perpetration of violence cannot be overlooked, the study therefore seeks to examine the influence of domestic violence on the development of anti-social behaviors among adolescents.

The experience of abuse and victimization may make young survivors vulnerable to engaging in delinquent or high-risk activities later in their lives, as well as further exposure to abuse. Relationship violence is inextricably linked to other school health and safety issues, such as truancy, weapons on campus, bullying and fighting. Unchecked violence and unhealthy relationships threaten not only the safety of teen survivors, but of every student and staff members in the school.

Effective school policies form the foundation of a comprehensive abuse intervention prevention and response framework. At the most basic level, policies guide teachers and administrators in their response to an incident of violence. However, school policies can also shape a school's climate by creating a space where healthy relationships are encouraged and abusive behaviors are responded to and handled in a way that supports students. This paper will assist schools in developing comprehensive policies addressing healthy relationships and abuse intervention and response as well as offer ideas and examples for developing procedures that are responsive to the needs of all student survivors.

1.2. Conceptualizing the Context of Domestic Violence

Interpersonal violence which specifically occurs within the family, the first context of children's socialization - is defined as domestic, intra-family or familial and is characterized by aggression among people with bonds of coexistence or kinship (Ministry of Health. Health Policy Secretary, 2001). With regard to violence in the family, women, elderly people and children are most often identified as the main victims (Stelko-Pereira and Williams, 2010).

In this sense, there are researchers and studies that aimed to study more closely the child who witnesses or is exposed to violence between their parents also called inter-parental violence, spousal or intimate partner violence, who may be heterosexual or homosexual (Archer, 2002; Krug *et al.*, 2002; Saltzman *et al.*, 2002). The most commonly observed and described acts of aggression in the family or inter-parental context are physical, psychological and sexual in nature. They are characterized by slaps, punches and kicks, intimidation, humiliation and disqualification, or involve forced intercourse and other forms of coercion. Other forms of controlling behavior are also observed and understood as violence, such as monitoring the movements, isolation from friends and other family members, and restricting access to information and assistance (Krug *et al.*, 2002).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the increase in child abuse has been attributed to rapid and radical social change (Haffejee, 1991; Jinadu, 1986; Loening, 1981). Such changes have been linked with an increase in child maltreatment and as such been attributed to a breakdown of traditional values and practices (Korbin, 1991). Apparently, higher occurrence of Childhood sexual abuse has also focused on social fragmentation. Such views have attributed Childhood sexual abuse to the increasing isolation of individuals and families from a sense of community; the result of increased mobility and the disintegration of neighborhoods, communities and kin networks Senn *et al.* (2008). With isolation, people are deprived of socially sanctioned forms of support and intimacy, and consequently they turn instead to incestuous behaviors, therefore facilitating Childhood sexual abuse.

Sub-Saharan Africa has been subject to conflict and extreme community violence over the past few decades. Such violence can take place within families, in the communities in which children live, or in areas of armed conflict. Living in a context of violence increases children's vulnerability to the full range of abuse, including sexual abuse. Being displaced from home as a consequence of violence further increases vulnerability. This vulnerability arises from the disruption and dismantling of the formal and informal protection mechanisms of families, communities and the state that subject women and children to risks that contribute to violence against women, especially sexual violence. Girls in particular are often the primary targets of abductions, often resulting in them being forced to participate directly in hostilities as fighters, or in "support" roles as spies, messengers, servants and sexual and domestic slaves.

More than 51% of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) lives below the international poverty threshold of US\$1.25 per day. High levels of poverty have contributed to the high prevalence of child

labour, with parents also encouraging children in order to improve the living standard of the household. In a study involving 24 countries in SSA, sexual exploitation was noted to be on the rise and was linked to labour, child prostitution, sex tourism, and the production of pornography. Sexual exploitation is the most commonly identified form of human trafficking globally (79%) [Senn et al. \(2008\)](#). Prevailing poverty renders children vulnerable to trafficking and is associated with exploitative, often hazardous and frequently violent child labour, including domestic work and prostitution. The scale of the problem is difficult to ascertain, with children working on the streets being vulnerable to sexual abuse from many individuals, including from passers-by and in some cases from those who offer them shelter [Senn et al. \(2008\)](#). Some of the sexual behaviours evident in parts of SSA are not the results of traditional “permissiveness”, but from the breakdown of traditional norms and regulations surrounding sexual behaviour, aggravated by widespread of poverty.

In Cameroon, human rights instruments have been incorporated into national law simply by means of ratification. It is worthy to note that article 45 of the Constitution of Cameroon states that duly approved or ratified treaties and international agreements have priority over national law. Nonetheless, the Committee against Torture argued, when it examined the implementation of the Convention against Torture by Cameroon in the year 2000, for greater protection of the of Cameroon’s international commitments in its domestic law, so as to be more easily accessible to judges and lawyers [Sampson and Lydia \(2006\)](#).

Also, the Committee on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed its concern about the exact legal status of the Covenant in the Cameroonian legal system and whether it can be invoked in national courts of law [Sampson and Lydia \(2006\)](#).

During the last session of the Committee against Torture in 2000, Cameroon admitted that its human rights record “left a good deal to be desired.” The UN Committee against Torture cited in 2000 a number of problems relating to police custody, the independence of the judiciary, the supervision of prison conditions and the need to investigate all allegations of torture and ill-treatment. Cameroon’s “concern with security and stability” apparently overrides “all other considerations, including some fundamental human rights” ([Rosenfeld et al., 2001](#)). In its Concluding Observations, the Committee against Torture expressed concern at, among others:

- The fact that, despite the policy pursued by the Government, torture seems to remain a widespread practice;
- The continuing practice of administrative detention, which allows the authorities reporting to or forming part of the executive to violate individual liberty, something which, under the rule of law, should come under the jurisdiction of the judiciary;
- The gap between the adoption of rules in accordance with human rights standards, including those designed to prevent the practice of torture, and the findings made *in situ* by an independent entity such as the Special Rapporteur on the question of torture, who reports the existence of numerous cases of torture;
- The imbalance between the large number of allegations of torture or ill-treatment and the small number of prosecutions and trials; No mention was made about gender-based human rights violations against women.

According to [Russell and Hulson \(1992\)](#), most violence against women in particularly takes place within the private sphere. State responsibility arising out of acts by private individuals lies at the heart of the gender-interpretation of the Convention against Torture. A growing body of international human rights law has recognized State responsibility for private acts when the state fails to exercise due diligence in preventing, investigating, prosecuting, punishing and repairing human rights violations. While it is obvious that not all violence against women can be qualified as torture within the meaning of the Convention against Torture, the mere fact that the perpetrator is a private individual rather than a state official should not automatically lead to the exclusion of the violence from the scope of the Convention against Torture as according to its article 1, torture means not only acts of severe pain and suffering by the a public official, but also at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in the official capacity. Depending on the severity of the violence and the circumstances giving rise to State responsibility, it is believe that violence against women perpetrated by private individuals can constitute a form of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment [Russell and Hulson \(1992\)](#).

Although there are no reliable statistics on domestic violence against women in Cameroon, reports indicate that it is a widespread problem in the country. Stakeholders are gravely concerned by the lack of measures taken by the government to eliminate domestic violence, which is still regarded as culturally acceptable by certain sectors of society. The Government has failed to take decisive action to combat the problem, such as passing legislation specifically prohibiting domestic violence abuse or training officials so that they understand the complexities of issues surrounding this type of abuse. It is also noted with concern that the government has not initiated any awareness raising campaign in order to eliminate of domestic violence against women (Wilkinson-Ryan and Hoffman, 2010).

As there is no special law dealing with domestic violence, victims of this type of violence have to file a complaint under the assault provisions of the Penal Code. However, the Penal Code negates the specific circumstances and needs that are involved in violence between domestic inmates. In fact, domestic violence continues to be seen as a private matter by the law enforcement officials Overstreet and Braun (2000).

It has been reported that domestic violence is encouraged by judges' acceptance of the principle that a man has "disciplinary rights" over his wife. This principle can come into play due to a wife's refusal to have sexual intercourse with her husband or due to his alcoholism. Moreover, as has been mentioned above, since husbands pay a "bride price" for their wives, it is difficult for women to divorce from their husbands, even in cases of domestic violence. It is not clear whether marital rape is considered a crime or not, since the doctrine is divided in to two camps and the courts are careful not to take a decision in favor of either side. However, it seems to be culturally accepted that consent to marriage constitutes consent to each request of sexual intercourse. Overstreet and Braun (2000).

Rape as an act of violence is punishable under article 296 of the Penal Code and punishable by a term of five to ten years imprisonment and is defined as "Whoever by force or moral ascendancy compels any female whether above or below the age of puberty to have sexual intercourse with him." Article 297 of the Penal Code deals with subsequent marriage and provides that "Marriage freely consented between the offender and the victim if over puberty at the time of commission shall have on any offence under either of the two last forgoing sections the effect of section 73 (1) to (4) of this Code". Article 73(1) to (4) of the Penal Code deals with amnesty; in other words, the rapist will be exonerated when he marries the rape victim. OMCT is gravely concerned about the exemption from punishment of the rapist when he marries the victim, as it allows the rapist's criminal responsibility to be extinguished, thus treating rape as a crime distinguished from other crimes against a person, and it undermines the woman's free and full consent to marriage since she is often put under pressure in order to save her and the family's "honour". Osofsky *et al.* (1993).

1.3. Prevalence of Exposure to Domestic Violence

When approaching the children exposed to inter-parental/domestic violence (DV), one must consider the phenomenon described above as actual and experienced by developing human beings emotionally linked to the perpetrators and victims. In these situations, the family context is no longer seen as a primordial space of acceptance and support. On the contrary, it turns into a scenario of tension and obstacles to the child's development. According to Sani (2008), we must consider the fact that "children witness violence between people who are emotionally close and with whom he/she shares the same physical space".

Edleson *et al.* (2008) point out that the exposure to or witnessing of DV encompasses multiple experiences. They argue that to witness, see, hear or even notice the mother's injuries and to become aware of them are also considered situations of exposure to family violence. The authors also specify that not only the awareness of the mother's victimization characterizes the phenomenon, but also the victimization of significant others who play the role of caregiver and with whom the child has a relationship of affection. Intra-family and/or intimate-partner domestic violence occurs in intergenerational and hierarchical relationships and consists of forms of violence use as a strategy for conflict resolution or for discipline. It also includes the lack of basic care to their children.

Another variation of psychological violence is the so called "witness to violence", which refers to violent situations witnessed by children/adolescent at home, school or in the community to which they belong. It is worth noting that a child or adolescent might be affected by more than one type of violence, especially in chronic and severe circumstances where these situations are related. The scientific literature provides indicators showing that children might imitate and perform, in other contexts, the aggressive behavior by simply observing violent models such as the case of witnessing violence between the parents.

Moreover, they can perceive aggressive behavior as an appropriate way to address and resolve conflicts (Bandura *et al.*, 1961; Bandura *et al.*, 2008).

In order to evaluate the direct or indirect impact of violence upon children, particularly with regard to the exposure to family violence (domestic and/or between partners), it is necessary to keep in mind that childhood is a delicate and important stage of life, requiring significant emotional investments and social support. The care provided to children by the family, by other social groups and institutions greatly influences their chances of survival and dramatically improves their quality of life. In addition, caring functions as a reference value, which helps children to construct their own identity and form the first ideas about themselves, about others and the world (Fred *et al.*, 2005).

The consequences of adolescents' sexual abuse form a significant portion of the global burden of disease and can be devastating. Above all, they can result in early death. But even children who survive must cope with terrible physical and emotional scars. Indeed, violence places at risk not only their health, but also their ability to learn and grow into adults who can create sound families and communities. The effects of abuse are profound, extending beyond the health and happiness of individuals to affect the well-being of entire communities. The consequences of sexual abuse are higher when the abuse is intra-familial (Browne and Finkelhor, 1986). Among the more common effects of sexual violence are those related to reproductive health, mental health, physical health and social wellbeing (Jewkes *et al.*, 2002), which are further described below.

Exposure to adolescents' sexual abuse may affect later sexual adjustment and may also increase the risk of re-victimization. It has been established that victims of adolescents' sexual abuse exhibit a variety of short and long-term behavioural deficiency. This include emotional and behavioural problems, which in turn often may include increased sexual risk behaviour, alcohol and drug use (Russell and Hulson (1992), While adolescents' sexual abuse is one of the childhoods and adolescent experiences that may influence sexual behaviour, it can serve as a measure of traumatic experience that precipitates rapid sexual development. These often arise because exposure to adolescents' sexual abuse may influence later sexual adjustments and sexual risks. Sexually abused girls are at risk of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS (Senn *et al.*, 2008). It is also unlikely that a condom or other forms of contraception will be used when an adolescent girl is being forced into sexual acts, increasing the likelihood of unwanted pregnancy (Russell and Hulson (1992).

1.4. Domestic Violence and the Development of Aggressive Behavioral

Domestic violence is a widespread societal problem with consequences reaching far beyond the family. It is conduct that has devastating effects for individual victims, their children, and their communities. In addition to these immediate effects, there is growing evidence that violence within the family becomes the breeding ground for other social problems such as substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, and violent crimes of all types. The presence of domestic violence is particularly relevant to issues that arise during a family preservation intervention. In order to most effectively and efficiently respond to individuals experiencing domestic violence, family preservation practitioners must not only understand the nature and etiology of domestic violence, but also understand how violence against intimates affects the victims, perpetrators, children, and community as a whole. This chapter provides the framework for that understanding of domestic violence by reviewing the definitions, causes, and issues related to victims, children, and perpetrators of domestic violence. Understanding the what, why, and who of domestic violence enables practitioners to intervene in a manner that ensures the safety of all family members, thus enabling effective parenting to take place in a safe and secure environment.

Domestic violence is socially constructed, have developed over time, and reflect prevailing understandings, interests and power distributions (Muehlenhard and Kimes, 1999). Feminist understandings shaped by the lived experiences of abused women and by supporting research evidence, have helped to expand conceptualizations of domestic violence as physically injurious assault by highlighting the interrelated range of abusive, coercive, controlling behaviours causing psychological, sexual or physical harm, which often accompany or precede the use or threat of physical force. However, researchers have given considerably less attention to sexual, psychological and other forms of abuse (DeKeseredy, 2000; O'Leary, 1999; Saunders, 2002). Some issues of terminology remain actively contested, such as whether domestic violence should be a gender-specific or neutral referent and/or encompass all forms and incidence of abuse in all types of intimate relationships (Mullender, 1996).

Domestic violence is not an isolated, individual event, but rather a pattern of repeated behaviors. Unlike stranger-to-stranger violence, in domestic violence the assaults are repeated against the same victim by the same perpetrator. These assaults occur in different forms: physical, sexual, psychological.

The pattern may include economic control as well. While physical assault may occur infrequently, other parts of the pattern may occur daily. One battering episode builds on past episodes and sets the stage for future episodes. All tactics of the pattern interact with each other and have profound effects on the victims. There is a wide range of coercive behaviors with a wide range of consequences, some physically injurious and some not; however, all are psychologically damaging. Some parts of the pattern are clearly chargeable as crimes in most states (e.g., physical assault, sexual assault, menacing, arson, kidnapping, harassment), while other battering episodes are not illegal (e.g., name calling, interrogating children, denying access to the family automobile, control of financial resources). While the family preservation practitioner may attempt to make sense of one incident that resulted in an injury, the victim is dealing with that one episode in the context of a pattern of both obvious and subtle episodes of coercion [Mazerolle et al. \(2010\)](#).

1.4.1. Physical Assault

Physical abuse includes spitting, scratching, biting, grabbing, shaking, shoving, pushing, restraining, throwing, twisting, slapping (open or closed hand), punching, choking, burning, and using weapons (household objects, knives, guns) against the victim. Some assaults result in physical injury and some do not. Sometimes a seemingly less serious type of physical abuse (e.g., a shove or push) can result in the most serious injury. The perpetrator may push the victim against a couch, a wall, down a flight of stairs, out of a moving car - all resulting in varying degrees of trauma.

1.4.2. Sexual Assault

Like physical abuse, sexual battering includes a wide range of behaviors: from pressured sex when the victim does not want sex, to coerced sex by manipulation or threat of physical force, or violent sex. Victims may be coerced or forced into a kind of sex they do not want (e.g., sex with third parties, physically painful sex, sexual activity they find offensive) or at a time they do not want it (e.g., when exhausted, in front of children, after a physical assault, when they are asleep, when they are not interested). In pressured sex, the perpetrator's tactics are more subtle: sulking or complaining when the victim says no. Sometimes victims will resist and then are punished, and sometimes they comply in hopes that the sexual abuse will end quickly. For many battered women this sexual violation is profound and may be difficult to discuss. Some battered women may be unsure whether this sexual abuse is really abuse, while for others it is clearly the ultimate betrayal.

1.4.3. Psychological Assault

There are several different uses of psychological assault. Because perpetrators will use various combinations of these tactics an individual victim will not necessarily have experienced all of them. Threats of violence and physical harm. The perpetrator's threats of harm may be against the victim or others important to the victim, or they may be threats of suicide by the perpetrator. The threats may be made directly by words ("I'm going to kill you." "No one is going to have you if I can't have you," "Your mother is going to pay," "I cannot live without you") or by actions (stalking, displaying of weapons, hostage taking, suicide attempts) [Russell and Hulson \(1992\)](#).

Sometimes the perpetrator coerces the victim into doing something illegal and then threatens to expose her, or he makes false accusations against c. Emotional abuse Emotional abuse as a tactic of control consists of a variety of verbal attacks and humiliations and occurs in the context of the threat or existence of physical harm. Emotional abuse consists of repeated verbal attacks against the partner's sense of self as an individual, parent, family member, friend, worker, or community member. The verbal attacks are sometimes fabricated with particular sensitivity to the victim's vulnerabilities (e.g., verbally abusing a victim about her history as an incest victim or about her language abilities, her skills as a parent, or her religious beliefs). Sometimes the perpetrator will undercut her sense of reality (e.g., specifically directing her to do one thing, and, when she complies, claiming that he never asked her to do it). Sometimes the emotional abuse consists of coercing her into doing very degrading things: ordering her to go to his mistress's home to retrieve her children, to get on her knees and use a toothbrush to clean up the food he smeared on the kitchen floor, or to violate her own moral standards. Sometimes the emotional abuse consists of humiliating her by verbally attacking her in front of family, friends, or strangers.

These tactics are similar to those used against prisoners of war or hostages and they are done for the same purpose: to gain and maintain the power and control of the perpetrator over the victim. When used by a perpetrator who is an intimate rather than a stranger or enemy, these tactics are even more confusing and ultimately more damaging. The emotional abuse in domestic violence cases is not merely a matter of

someone getting angry and calling his partner a few names or cursing. Not all verbal attacks or insults between intimates are necessarily acts of domestic violence. In order for a verbal insult to be considered domestic violence, it must be part of a pattern of coercive behaviors in which the perpetrator is using or threatening to use physical force, [Lynch and Cicchetti \(1998\)](#).

The verbal attacks and other tactics of control are intertwined with the threat of harm to maintain the perpetrator's dominance in the relationship through fear. While repeated verbal insults and abuse are damaging to both the partner and the relationship over time, they alone do not establish the same climate of fear as does verbal abuse combined with the threat of physical harm. Emotionally abusive relationships may be damaging, but they are not lethal. Therefore, interventions for relationships with no threat of violence do not always have to focus on the victim's safety. Not all "bad" relationships are domestic violence cases: therefore careful identification and assessment interviews need to be carried out in less obvious cases. If the victim feels abused or controlled or afraid of her partner without clear descriptions of physical harm, then it is important to accept the client's view and to respond to concerns about her safety and psychological well-being. d. Isolation Perpetrators try to control victims' time, activities, and contact with others, [Linares et al. \(2001\)](#).

They gain psychological control over victims by a combination of isolating and disinformation tactics. Isolating tactics may become more overtly abusive as time passes at first, perpetrators cut off their victims from other supportive relationships by claims of loving them so much that they want to be with them all the time. In response to these statements, a victim initially spends ever-increasing amounts of time with the perpetrator. Subtle ways of isolating the victim are replaced with more overt means of verbal abuse (e.g., complaints about "interfering family" or "dykey" looking friends, or the victim's spending too much time with others). Sometimes the perpetrator uses physical assaults to separate the victim from family or friends [Kubrin et al. \(2009\)](#).

Through incremental isolation, the perpetrator can increase his psychological control of the victim to such a degree that he seems to determine her reality. In addition to the isolating tactics, there are disinformation tactics. These include distorting what is real through lies, contradictory information, or withholding information. For example, perpetrators may lie to victims about their legal rights or the outcomes of family preservation interventions. Victims believe what perpetrators say because they are isolated from other sources of information [Kubrin and Weitzer \(2003\)](#).

1.4.4. Economic Control

Some perpetrators control victims by controlling their access to all of the family resources: time, transportation, food, clothing, shelter, and money. In some domestic violence cases it does not matter whether the victim or the perpetrator is the primary financial provider or whether both contribute; the perpetrator controls how the finances are spent. He may actively resist her becoming financially self-sufficient as a way to maintain his power and control over her. He may expect her to be the family "bookkeeper," with her keeping all records and writing all checks, or he may keep financial information away from her. In both scenarios, he alone makes the decisions about how resources are used. Victims are put in the position of having to get "permission" to spend money on basic family needs. When victims leave battering relationships, some perpetrators will use economics as a way to maintain control (e.g., instituting legal procedures costly to the victim, destroying assets in which she has a share, refusing to work "on the books" where there would be legal access to his income). All of these tactics may be used regardless of the economic class of the family [Russell and Hulson \(1992\)](#).

2. THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.1. Social Disorganization Theory by Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay 1929

Why do some neighborhoods have higher crime rates than others? What is it about certain communities that consistently generate high crime rates? These are the central questions of interest for social disorganization theory, a macro-level perspective concerned with explaining the spatial distribution of crime across areas. Social disorganization theory has emerged as the critical framework for understanding the relationship between community characteristics and crime in urban areas. According to the theory, certain neighborhood characteristics most notably poverty, residential instability, and racial heterogeneity can lead to social disorganization. Social disorganization, in turn, can cause crime.

Social disorganization refers to the inability of a community to realize the common values of its members and maintain effective social controls. As Kornhauser describes, "Social disorganization exists in the first instance when the structure and culture of a community are incapable of implementing and expressing the values of its own residents." ([Kornhauser, 1978](#)). According to the theory, a common value

among neighborhood residents is the desire for a crime-free community. In essence, then, socially disorganized neighborhoods are ineffective in combating crime.

A socially organized community is characterized by (1) solidarity, or an internal consensus on essential norms and values (e.g., residents want and value the same things, such as a crime-free neighborhood); (2) cohesion, or a strong bond among neighbors (e.g., residents know and like one another); and (3) integration, with social interaction occurring on a regular basis (e.g., residents spend time with one another). Conversely, a disorganized community has little solidarity among residents and lacks social cohesion or integration. Perhaps the greatest difference between socially organized and disorganized neighborhoods is the levels of informal social control in those neighborhoods. Informal social control is defined as the scope of collective intervention that the community directs toward local problems, including crime (Kornhauser, 1978; Shaw and McKay, 1969). It is the informal, nonofficial actions taken by residents to combat crime in their communities, such as, for example, when residents question persons about suspicious activity or admonish misbehaving youth and inform parents of their children's misconduct. In essence, residents act as the "eyes and ears" of the community and their informal surveillance, and even simple presence, deters others from engaging in crime. According to the theory, socially disorganized neighborhoods have lower levels of informal social control, and thus experience higher crime rates when compared to more socially organized neighborhoods.

Ecological characteristics of neighborhoods influence the degree of social disorganization in the community. This is because certain characteristics can impede the development of social ties that promote the ability to solve common problems, including crime. Ecological characteristics of greatest interest to social disorganization researchers include poverty, joblessness, population mobility or turnover, racial composition, and family disruption, among others. Although community characteristics such as poverty or residential instability are related to crime, these factors themselves do not directly cause crime, according to the theory. That is, ecological characteristics are related to crime only indirectly through various neighborhood processes such as informal social control. As such, poverty, residential instability, and other ecological characteristics are important in as much as they affect the mediating processes of social disorganization.

In light of the above discussion, the basic social disorganization causal model can be expressed as: neighborhood characteristics → social ties → informal social control → crime. Sampson describes the processes by which neighborhood characteristics and crime are associated:

Neighborhood characteristics such as family disorganization, residential mobility, and structural density weaken informal social control networks; informal social controls are impeded by weak local social bonds, lowered community attachment, anonymity, and reduced capacity for surveillance and guardianship; other factors such as poverty and racial composition also probably affect informal control, although their influence is in all likelihood indirect; residents in areas characterized by family disorganization, mobility, and building density are less able to perform guardianship activities, less likely to report general deviance to authorities, to intervene in public disturbances, and to assume responsibility for supervision of youth activities; the result is that deviance is tolerated and public norms of social control are not effective (Sampson, 1987).

The promise of social ties for social disorganization theory is less apparent in Miller *et al.* (1999) study, which explicitly assesses how the frequency of interaction among neighborhood residents influences crime. Using survey data from residents of 60 urban neighborhoods (spanning three states), Bellair finds that social interaction, here defined as the percentage of community residents who get together once a year or more, reduces community rates of burglary, motor vehicle theft, and robbery. He also finds that social interaction largely mediates the effect of neighborhood characteristics on community crime, in support of social disorganization theory. Yet Bellair's findings ultimately raise questions regarding the value of social ties for the theory. Although social interaction is significantly associated with community crime rates in the direction the theory predicts, the fact that even infrequent interaction can reduce community crime rates challenges the theory's assumption that strong and dense ties are what matter most; Bellair's "once a year or more" definition reflects a level of interaction that is arguably less than what the perspective theorizes.

This theory indicates evidence regarding the impact of neighborhood subculture on community violence and delinquency. Of particular interest is their finding that areas of low economic status were

characterized by diversity in norms and standards of behavior, rather than uniformity (recall that solidarity, or an internal consensus on norms and values, is critical for the current study given the fact that indicators such as child and sexual abuse seem to have cultural reliance).

Shaw and McKay found that in poor communities, youth were exposed to a wide variety of contradictory (and sometimes unlawful) standards rather than to a relatively consistent and conventional pattern of norms. It was also determined that in these communities, children were exposed to adult criminals, from whom they could learn (illegal) behavior. In essence then, alongside social ties and informal social control, neighborhood subculture constituted a critical component of social disorganization theory, and helped to account for why crime rates were higher in disorganized neighborhoods. Researchers have continued to examine how neighborhood subculture impacted crime and delinquency, as well as how it was itself impacted by neighborhood conditions. Unfortunately, for reasons that have been explicated elsewhere, neighborhood subculture increasingly became irrelevant to the theory. Discussions regarding neighborhood subculture's impact became obsolete and empirical examinations of the theory did not include measures reflecting local subculture. Therefore, the current study will fill the gap in establishing findings that best explain context specific issues of community violence and the development of anti-social behavior.

2.2. Domestic Violence and the Development of Anti-Social Behaviors

In a study conducted by [Nixon et al. \(2013\)](#), on children exposed to domestic violence, it indicated that there was a correlation between children that have been exposed to domestic violence and those that go on to abuse their own families or when in other relationships. The study made use of a correlational design with a sample of 88 respondents. The study made use of the survey research design. Research findings showed that witnessing domestic violence as a boy can be related to men's perpetration of domestic violence. Many female victims of domestic violence come from homes where they witnessed domestic violence between their parents. Learning theory would explain that boys "learn" how to become abusers and girls "learn" about victimization contends that domestic violence disrupts a child's emotional attachments, which goes on to affect the child's abilities throughout their lives, particularly in their intimate relationships. These attachment issues can become a factor in their intimate relationships where jealousy and fear can lead to increased aggression and violence ([McKee and Payne, 2014](#)).

Children often look to their caregiver for basic needs such as safety and modeling for self-regulation. Research shows that a risk in one of those areas can impact the development of the other, and the need for consistent caregiving in a non-violent environment is crucial for development. The relationship of a caregiver has traditionally been one of love, support, and nurturance; unfortunately, the effects of domestic violence can interrupt that bond, and damage the relationship. Child witnesses of domestic violence are more likely to experience health problems [Russell and Hulson \(1992\)](#), Previous studies have shown general behavioral, cognitive, and emotional implications when children are exposed to irritability, sleep problems, fear of being alone, immaturity, language development, poor concentration, aggressiveness, antisocial behaviors, anxiety, depression, violence behaviors, low frustration tolerance, problems eating, and being passive or withdrawn [Russell and Hulson \(1992\)](#).

[Russell and Hulson \(1992\)](#), studied the influence of parenting factors on family dynamics and found an association between two family processes (parental dyadic aggression and unskilled parenting) on the antisocial behaviour of children and early adolescents and later male adulthood and aggression towards their partner. This study made use of the survey research design with a sample population of 209 respondents. found the following associations:

- Unskilled and coercive parenting practices are associated with the intergenerational transmission of aggression to young males leading to antisocial behaviours in adolescence.
- Unskilled parenting is associated with parental education, and stress related to children's antisocial behaviour.
- Little use of positive encouragement and discipline (requiring a negative consequence for negative behaviour) are associated with antisocial behaviours in childhood that can lead to later antisocial and aggressive behaviours.

Failure to develop interpersonal skills and the use of coercive and aggressive interpersonal tactics with children at a young age increases the likelihood of adulthood aggression. This does not mean that family dynamics is the only determining factor for aggression in adulthood. Adulthood aggression is one indicator of general antisocial behaviour. This indicates that violence prevention initiatives should

incorporate effective parenting techniques for parents (or couples thinking of starting a family) in order to encourage positive social behaviour and reduce antisocial behaviour.

Russell and Hulson (1992), identified the social norms, misinformation, myths and stereotypes that create or lead to attitudes and understandings that accept and favour the use of violence (. The study used a survey research design with a sample size of 421 respondents. The results indicated amongst others that; Men were more likely than women to reinforce negative myths and stereotypes of violence, and to minimize, trivialize and deny the impact of that violence. Men that had attitudes that do not support gender equality are more likely to have attitudes that support violence.

Men were also less likely than women to understand how physical, emotional and psychological violence is intentionally or unintentionally inflicted on women. This lack of understanding is reflected in the prevalence of emotional and psychological abuse experienced by women. Emotional and psychological violence consists of a range of behaviors that generate fear to ‘win arguments’ and assert male dominance Emotional violence is more often experienced by women (25 percent) than men (14 percent) and with associated anxiety or fear (72 percent versus 35 percent, respectively).

2.3. Research Design

The ex-post-facto design employing both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection was used. The design fitted well with the purpose of the study. The study examined retrospectively the possible effects of domestic violence on adolescent’s exhibition of antisocial behaviours. The design was suitable for the psychological contexts where the independent variable or variables lay outside the researcher’s control. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods in terms of data collection techniques and data analysis packages and approaches.

2.4. Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size of this study was made up of 150respondents (125 adolescents, and 10 parents. This sample was deduced from the accessible population which was made up of all adolescents found. Convenient sampling was used to select adolescents while the snowball technique was used to supplement convenient sampling to sample parents.

Table 1. Sample size of the study

Categories	Sample
Adolescents	125
Parents/Guardians	10
Total	135

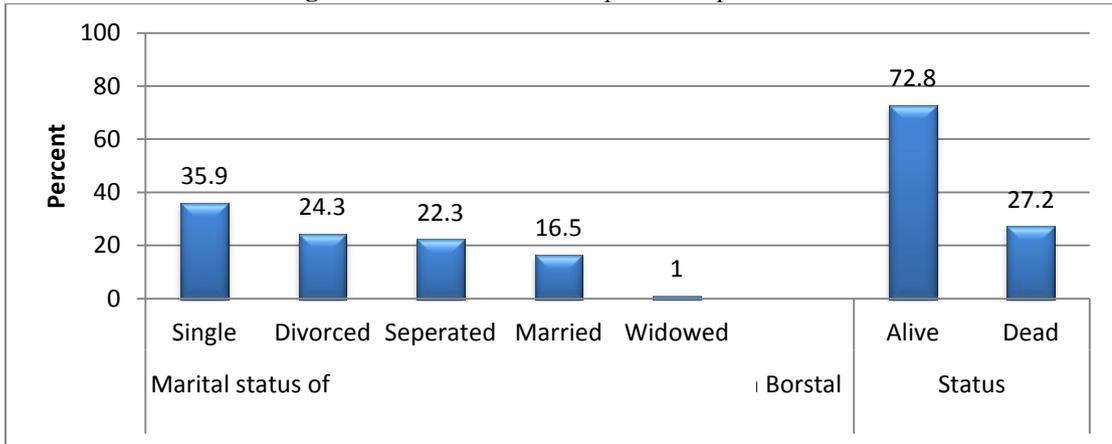
2. 4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of Respondents (adolescents)

Age			Gender		
15-16	125	100%	Male 25 Female 100	104	100%
Religion			Region of origin		
African traditional religion (ATR)/Ancestry	10	9.7	South-West	23	22.3
Christian	84	81.6	North-West	48	46.6
Muslim	9	8.7	Littoral	12	11.7
Had been to school before dropping out			West	3	2.9
Yes	100	97.1	Centre	4	3.9
No	3	2.9	East	7	6.8
Highest level of school attained by respondents			South	2	1.9
Primary	5	4.9	North	2	1.9
Secondary	67	65.0	Far-North	2	1.9
Post-secondary/Vocational training	30	29.1	Have ever been out of school		
University	1	1.0	Yes	22	21.4
No	81	78.6			

2.4.2. Parents' Status

Figure 2. Marital status of respondents' parents



2.4.3. Person with whom the respondents stayed with at the time of their exposure to community violence

Figure 2. Person with whom the respondents stayed with at the time of their exposure to community violence

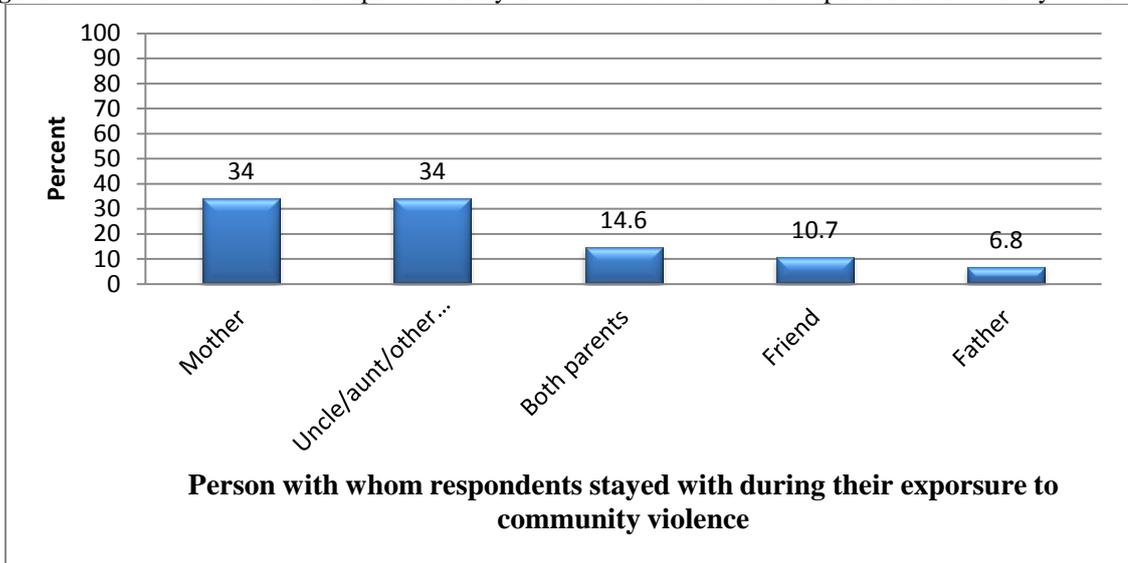


Table 3. Highest level of schooling of parent/guardian

Level of education	Father	Mother	Relative/Family friend	Total
Never went to school	7.6% (7)	3.7% (3)	4.1% (3)	5.3% (13)
Primary school	1.1% (1)	15.9% (13)	4.1% (3)	6.9% (17)
Secondary school	6.5% (6)	24.4% (20)	26.0% (19)	18.2% (45)
High School	25.0% (23)	29.3% (24)	23.3% (17)	25.9% (64)
Post-secondary/vocational training	33.7% (31)	14.6% (12)	27.4% (20)	25.5% (63)
University	26.1% (24)	12.2% (10)	15.1% (11)	18.2% (45)

Table 4. Distribution of parents/guardians' principal occupation

Occupation	Father	Mother	Relative/Family friend	Total
Farming	6.8%(7)	27.2%(28)	6.8%(7)	12.9%(42)
Hunting/Fishing	1.0%(1)	1.0%(1)	4.9%(5)	2.1%(7)
Craftsman	3.9%(4)	2.9%(3)	7.8%(8)	4.6%(15)
Small trade	3.9%(4)	5.8%(6)	20.4%(21)	9.5%(31)
Business	30.1%(31)	17.5%(18)	14.6%(15)	19.6%(64)
Exploitation of natural resources (Artisanal Mining e.g. Sand, stones; wood, NTFPs, etc.)	7.8%(8)	7.8%(8)	10.7%(11)	8.3 % (27)
Skilled work (Engineer, lawyer, consultant, administrator, etc.)	34.0%(35)	12.6%(13)	5.8%(6)	16.6%(54)
Semi/Unskilled Work (technician, hairdresser, tailor/seamstress, etc.)	6.8%(7)	13.6%(14)	6.8%(7)	8.6%(28)
Student	0.0%(0)	0.0%(0)	1.9%(2)	0.6%(2)
Category of worker				
Paid government employee	32.0%(33)	6.8%(7)	1.0%(1)	12.6%(41)
Paid employee from private employer	9.7%(10)	8.7%(9)	18.4%(19)	11.7%(38)
Total paid employee	41.7% (43)	15.5% (16)	19.4% (20)	24.2% (79)
Self-employed	36.9%(38)	20.4%(21)	23.3%(24)	25.5%(83)
Retired	10.7%(11)	14.6%(15)	9.7%(10)	11.0%(36)
Unemployed	3.9%(4)	31.1%(32)	12.6%(13)	15.0%(49)

N=103

3. DATA ANALYSIS

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to present the distribution of subjects between and within subsets using frequencies and proportions and Multiple-Responses Analysis (MRS).

Qualitative data was analysed using thematic descriptions. Elaborate coding and continuous comparisons were used to develop the analysis, allowing the categories to emerge from close reading and analysis.

4. FINDINGS

Table 5. Respondents characterization of Domestic violence and the development of anti-social behaviours

Items	Stretched				Collapsed	
	A	SA	D	SD	A & SA	D & SD
Domestic violence and the development of anti-social behaviours						
I have constantly been beaten by my parents even when am sick	80.6% (83)	16.5% (17)	1.9% (2)	1.0% (1)	97.1% (100)	2.9% (3)
I am always insulted and labeled negatively	47.6% (49)	46.6% (48)	4.9% (5)	1.0% (1)	94.2% (97)	5.8% (6)
I am never given food at home each time I miss doing house chores	62.1% (64)	33.0% (34)	4.9% (5)	0.0% (0)	95.1% (98)	4.9% (5)
I am often forced to do work beyond my strength	54.4% (56)	41.7% (43)	3.9% (4)	0.0% (0)	96.1% (99)	3.9% (4)
My opinions are never heard	66.0% (68)	28.2% (29)	5.8% (6)	0.0% (0)	94.2% (97)	5.8% (6)
My daily activities are strictly controlled and I am not allowed to have friends.	60.2% (62)	36.9% (38)	2.9% (3)	0.0% (0)	97.1% (100)	2.9% (3)
MRS	61.8% (382)	33.8% (209)	4.0% (25)	0.3% (2)	95.6% (591)	4.4% (27)

As indicated in table 5, respondents generally acknowledged that they experience various forms of domestic violence with weight of 95.6% which greatly affect their behavioural patterns. They mostly had constantly been beaten by parents/guardians even when they were sick 97.1% (100) whereby 80.6% (83) strongly agreed. This was followed by the fact that they were never given food at home each time they missed doing house chores 97.1% (100) whereby 60.2% (62) strongly agreed. Respondents acknowledged that their daily activities are strictly controlled and they are not allowed to have friends. 96.1% (99) whereby 54.4% (56) strongly agreed. Those that stated that they learned to listen to adults when they give them advices about their lifestyle were 95.1% (98) whereby 62.1% (64) strongly agreed. Respondents agreed that their opinions are never heard 94.2% (97) whereby 66.0% (68) strongly agreed. Then, being the least but with very high appreciation as well, the fact that they learned to ask adults for help when other people annoy or disrespect them with proportion of 94.2% (97) whereby 47.6% (49) strongly agreed.

Table 6. Respondent’ characterization of domestic violence and learned anti-social behaviours

Domestic Violence	Stretched				Collapsed	
	A	SA	D	SD	A & SA	D & SD
I now fight to defend myself	60.2% (62)	22.3% (23)	10.7% (11)	6.8% (7)	82.5% (85)	17.5% (18)
Nobody can forcefully take my property again at home	39.8% (41)	35.0% (36)	15.5% (16)	9.7% (10)	74.8% (77)	25.2% (26)
I now steal food since am hardly given when hungry*	53.4% (55)	22.3% (23)	19.4% (20)	4.9% (5)	75.7% (78)	24.3% (25)
I now use abusive language*	36.9% (38)	30.1% (31)	26.2% (27)	6.8% (7)	67.0% (69)	33.0% (34)
I now drink a lot of alcohol*	38.8% (40)	21.4% (22)	32.0% (33)	7.8% (8)	60.2% (62)	39.8% (41)
I feel socially misfit	37.9% (39)	45.6% (47)	11.7% (12)	4.9% (5)	83.5% (86)	16.5% (17)
i bully my enemies*	37.9% (39)	23.3% (24)	30.1% (31)	8.7% (9)	61.2% (63)	38.8% (40)
i abuse girls/boys who fight me*	24.3% (25)	12.6% (13)	42.7% (44)	20.4% (21)	36.9% (38)	63.1% (65)
MRS	19.5% (161)	29.2% (241)	20.9% (172)	30.3% (250)	48.8% (402)	51.2% (422)

*MRS: Reversed conceptual polarization.

A percentage of 48.8% respondents acknowledged to have developed anti-social behaviours as a result of their domestic violence experiences. Respondents mostly perceived that students after experiencing domestic violence find it difficult to integrate well into the society due to their traumatising experiences, this had a percentage of 83.5 (86) among whom 37.9% (39) strongly agreed. This was followed by those who agreed to the fact that “they now fight” with a percentage of 82.5 (85) among whom 60.2% (62) were actually certain.

Those that acknowledged that respondents “now abuse girls/boys as a means of retaliation” were 63.1% (65). A percentage of 39.8% (41) now drinks alcohol due to domestic violence experiences among whom 7.8% (8) strongly agreed.

Table 7. Model Fitting Information and Model Explanatory Power predicting the effect of domestic violence on the development of anti-social behaviours among adolescents.

Context	Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficient	Explanatory/predictive power of the model (Pseudo R-Square) based on Cox & Snell (%)*
Within the nuclear home	$\chi^2=16.256$ df=6 P=0.012	14.6
Within the extended family	$\chi^2=14.486$ df=9 P=0.042	15.6

IVM	$\chi^2=24.068$ df=15 P=0.028	23.1
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*Dependent variable: Domestic violence on the development of anti-social behaviours among adolescents.

The influence of domestic violence on development of anti-social behaviours among adolescents was appraised using the Logistic Regression Model. The variability explained by this model was significant in the context within the nuclear home (Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficient: $\chi^2=16.256$; P=0.012), and within the extended family context (Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficient: $\chi^2=14.486$; P=0.042) and when combining the two contexts (Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficient: $\chi^2=24.068$; P=0.028). The Explanatory Power (EP) / Predictive Power was 14.6% (Cox & Snell R Square=0.146) within the nuclear home, slightly higher with a value of 15.6% (Cox & Snell R Square=0.156) obtained within the extended family context while the combined effect of both context (IVM) had the highest Explanatory Power of 23.1% (Cox & Snell R Square=0.231).

The hypothesis stated above was then retained therefore implying that there is a significant relationship between domestic violence and the development of anti-social behaviours among adolescents, though at a very moderate rate, contribute in reducing anti-social behaviours from adolescents as indicated by the sign of Beta depicted by Wald Statistics. However, as far as impacting domestic violence on adolescents to curb anti-social behaviours is concerned, equal consideration was given to within the nuclear home and within the extended family context given that they had almost the same explanatory power, with the combined effects of both being more effective given the higher explanatory power of the IVM.

If the overall influence domestic violence on anti-social behaviours among adolescents was significant, how do individual predictors contribute to this effect? Using Wald statistics, the answers were as depicted on the table below.

Table 8. Wald statistics depicting the influence of domestic violence within the nuclear home on anti-social behaviours among adolescents

Social skills training	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.
I have constantly been beaten by my parents even when am sick	-.267	.428	.391	1	0.532
I am always insulted and labeled negatively	-.043	.380	.013	1	0.910
I am never given food at home each time I miss doing house chores	-1.262	.437	8.362	1	0.004
I am often forced to do work beyond my strength	-.340	.423	.644	1	0.422
My opinions are never heard	-.298	.409	.531	1	0.466
My daily activities are strictly controlled and I am not allowed to have friends.	.204	.448	.207	1	0.649

In the context within the nuclear home, it was obvious that the more adolescents experience domestic violence, the more they turn to exhibit anti-social behaviours.

Table 9. Wald statistics depicting the influence of domestic violence within the extended family among adolescents

Social skills training	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.
I am never provided with things like food and clothes at home	-.276	.390	.503	1	0.478
I have learned to steal and are not afraid of punishment	-.459	.333	1.901	1	0.168
My relatives steal but am always the one to be beaten.	.602	.281	4.600	1	0.032
Our parents do punish me for no good reason	-.071	.248	.082	1	0.775
Our parents/guardians fight or use abusive language	.280	.279	1.006	1	0.316
I do keep bad company now.	-.654	.286	5.236	1	0.022

Fights are common among my extended family members	.086	.329	.068	1	0.795
My relatives bully their enemies which I have learned.	-.113	.290	.152	1	0.696
My relatives abuse girls but are never punished.	.079	.291	.075	1	0.784

Within the extended family context, it was obvious that the more respondent experience domestic violence and marginalisation among family children, the more the involvement in violent crimes as a strategy to fight back violence arts.

5. SUMMARY OF QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The interviews were analyzed using a thematic analysis and were arranged and presented in themes. Participants described a clear understanding of the main aim of the research study. Participants reported their views of what violence is, the meaning attached to being part of a community as well as the disadvantages sometimes associated with community life. Participants believed that being part of a community provides opportunities for developing close relationships, promoting unity among people as well as ensuring safety. However, participants also alluded to the manner in which one person’s actions could negatively impact the entire community. In view of this, it can be deduced that young people from this high violence community understand that one person’s actions affect the entire community, therefore, violence occurring at one home and with one person will and did affect everyone else. This group of young people seems to have a collectivist view of living in a community. Traumatic events or incidents concern not only one individual, but all people. Participants reflected upon the definition of violence in terms of various types of violence, indicative of the violence that they have been exposed to in their community. Furthermore, this group of young people also understood violence as being violent in terms of intent; therefore, it is cruel and causes conflict.

These two groups of young people identified one of the points of origin of violence to be the home, within which parents do not teach children proper values such as respect, or have any control over them. Violence also starts at and is exacerbated at school. Participants also reported that violence is a continuous process, one that ‘starts small,’ by stealing stationary and expands to the more serious crimes.

Individual factors were also specified as contributing to violence perpetration, such as to conform to the standards of others, an effect of peer pressure and laziness. Participants thought that some people simply do not want to earn their own living and would rather steal it from others. Furthermore, not only parents but people in positions of power, especially at government level, were also not setting a good enough example for younger children.

All parents used for the interview had been exposed to some form of violence in the community. They could identify it at all levels, therefore, at home, school, church, soccer clubs and at government level. These groups of young people have been exposed to different types of violence from being caught in the crossfire between gangs, witnessing a married couple fight physically, to burglaries. However, the most common form of violence they not only witnessed but were victims as well was robbery. In fact, people were frequently exposed to robberies and theft, including being robbed of cellular phones, their bicycles, money and basically anything participants had at the time.

The effects of violence experienced by participants also varied. Most participants felt that violence is wrong and selfish since they have earned their possessions and those who simply steal them have not. Emotional effects of shock, sadness and distress were also experienced. This group of adolescents also employed certain coping strategies in order to protect themselves from violence such as staying indoors, only leaving their houses at certain times, walking with a knife, their dog etc. Not only have these adolescents had to carry these as defense weapons, but they have also had to use them. Participants felt that it was self-defense and, therefore, appropriate. Furthermore, these young people also felt that perpetrators should be punished more severely for their crimes and felt that perhaps acts of revenge were even more appropriate.

In addition, participants reflected upon their experiences of having been exposed to violence in such a way as to suggest that they have normalized violence. Participants laughed and joked at different people’s stories of violence. They also distinguished between good gangsters (those who stood up and fought for people instead of against) and bad gangsters (those who do wrong and commit crime for selfish reasons). Therefore, according to this group of young people, there is a time when violence is acceptable and a time that it is not. Moreover, given the frequency with which these adolescents have been exposed

to violence, participants frequently reflected upon the inevitability of violence. They continuously revealed how they were well aware that it could happen at any time.

In review, participants have a particularly socialized construction of community life. The meaning that community violence has for these participants is seen as not only affecting the particular victim, but the entire community. Violence is perceived as a process which results as a consequence of disintegrating values, social and public services and a lack of community cohesion. The manner in which these participants referred to violence perpetration strongly associated to a social learning theory and Bronfenbrenner's ecological model.

6. DISCUSSIONS

As initially predicted, exposure to domestic violence alone was not the key predictor of aggressive behavioral patterns. The proposed model predicted that exposure to domestic violence would lead to increased risk of aggressive behavior at homes, in school, aggressive attitudes/cognitions, and/or psych emotional distress that then mediates a relationship between exposure to domestic violence and the development of aggressive behavioral patterns. Of the measured variables in the proposed model, only exposure to violence in the family showed a positive relationship, with practical strength and statistical significance in predicting attitudes towards aggression and only attitudes towards aggression showed a negative relationship, with practical strength and statistical significance in predicting the development of aggressive behavioral patterns.

Despite previous extensive research on the negative association of direct and indirect exposure of domestic violence and well-being among youth, one ongoing question is whether and how exposure to domestic violence may influence the development of aggressive behavioral patterns. Prior researchers have been equivocal as to whether a direct or indirect relationship may exist between exposure and academic performance. While several researchers (Baker-Henningham *et al.*, 2009; Gorman-Smith and Tolan, 1998; Schwab-Stone *et al.*, 1995) found statistically significant correlations between scores on exposure to domestic violence and the development of aggressive behavioral patterns, others have found either weak or statistically non-significant relationships (Ozer and Weinstein, 2004) This study showed statistically significant, yet weak, bivariate relationships between exposure to domestic violence and the development of aggressive behavioral patterns.

However, results of the current study have supported previous suggestions that apparent relationships between exposure to domestic violence and the development of aggressive behavioral patterns may be mediated or moderated by other factors. For example, concluded that when youth are exposed to violence, they are more likely to experience lower tests scores in math and verbal assessments, while also demonstrating more negative interaction with their teachers. Proposed that children who are repeatedly exposed to violence are more prone to elevated levels of anxiety and aggressive behavior at school, that negatively affects academic achievement.

Consistent with previous findings, exposure to community violence relates to aggressive behavior and anxiety or depressive symptoms (Osofsky *et al.*, 1993; Schwab-Stone *et al.*, 1995). This study shows that this relation is significant, even after controlling for previous symptom status of community violence on aggressive behaviour. These findings also add to the previous literature linking symptoms and exposure to community violence by evaluating the relation of each of these factors with other types of stressful events. The results suggest differences in the relations of exposure to community violence and other types of stress to aggression and anxiety or depression. When exposure to violence is considered along with other types of stressors, the other stressors are not related to changes in aggression. Thus, community violence appears to be a qualitatively different type of stressful life event as related to aggression.

Although these analyses cannot explain the processes by which domestic violence exposure may relate to aggression, there are several potential explanations for this finding that merit mentioning. Most can be clarified with evaluation of exposure and other variables over multiple sampling points. First, it is possible that the relation between exposure to domestic violence and aggression found in this study is in part due to these youth seeking out violent contexts. Youth may be exposed to violence because they are participating in violence or are involved in activities that put them at greater risk for exposure. Because these data are correlational, direction of effect cannot be determined.

Second, exposure to high levels of community violence may change the normative beliefs about use of aggression or violence. It may be that after having been exposed over time, one comes to believe aggressive and violent responses are normal acceptable responses. Increasing exposure to violence relates to increasing levels of aggression. Evaluation of these potential hypotheses can only occur with additional

waves of data. These explanations are less adequate for explaining the anxiety or depression outcome. Longitudinal analyses are needed that permit the tracing of the direction of influence and specific versus general processes of these relationships.

Findings from interviews also suggest a relation between parenting practices and family relationship characteristics and an increase in symptoms for this group of inner-city adolescents. Family Structure was a significant predictor of change in status for aggression and anxiety or depression. Structure refers to level of organizing and support experienced within the family, as well as the degree to which the family does not hold deviant beliefs (e.g., *it's okay to lie to someone if it will keep you out of trouble, it's okay to skip school every once in a while*). The results suggest that the lack of the family as a dependable supportive refuge particularly when experiencing any form of violence relates to an increase aggressive behaviours. These family characteristics of organization and support may be particularly important for youth living in urban environments where there are increased stressors, fewer resources, and less predictability.

Research shows that witnessing domestic violence as a boy can be related to men's perpetration of domestic violence. Many female victims of domestic violence come from homes where they witnessed domestic violence between their parents [Whitfield et al. \(2003\)](#). Learning theory would explain that boys "learn" how to become abusers and girls "learn" about victimization. Contends that domestic violence disrupts a child's emotional attachments, which go on to affect the child's abilities throughout their lives, particularly in their intimate relationships. These attachment issues can become a factor in their intimate relationships where jealousy and fear can lead to increased aggression and violence ([McKee and Payne, 2014](#)).

These findings equally provide support for a widely held but previously unsubstantiated concern about the harmful relation of exposure to high rates of community violence, aggression and anxiety or depression among adolescents. These findings suggest the importance of lessening such exposure and the potential benefits of doing so even when focused on adolescents. Further, these findings suggest that for adolescents living in urban environments, interventions that focus on family factors without consideration of this important aspect of community context may have limited impact. The task faced by families living in poor, urban communities is likely different than that faced by families living in neighborhoods with less violence and greater resources. The basic work may be to help families learn to manage and cope with these stressors so they are then able to provide the consistency, structure, and support children need.

The impacts of domestic violence help explain the difficulty that many experience in parenting as well as in intimate relationships. According to the attachment theory, in the parent child relationship, the parent's role is to provide protection. When parents are unable to protect themselves, this causes distress for the parent-child relationship, and strains the attachment. According to [Belsky \(1999\)](#) there are differences between the attachment patterns and parenting styles of secure mothers in secure relationships versus those in non-secure relationships. Children who experience abusive or unattached caregiving are likely to develop negative reactions to their caregiver, because an absence of attachment or increased anger and that can cause negative reactions of themselves ([Waldman et al., 2013](#)).

There has been a proven correlation between children that have been exposed to domestic violence and those that go on to abuse their own families or when in other relationships ([Nixon et al., 2013](#)). Mounting evidence has linked an exposure to family violence and perpetration of teen dating violence. This is a major safety concern and reports show that generally 10-20% of adolescents have experienced dating violence. Social learning theory explains that children exposed to parental violence are more likely to experience violence themselves, and go on to violent acts towards others. We also know that not all of these children will go on to perpetrate.

7. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Understanding patterns of risk and protection can inform prevention and intervention programs for adolescents who are exposed to violence. For example, efforts to increase adolescents' self-worth may be paramount aspects of prevention and intervention programs for adolescents who are exposed to community violence.

There is an increased need for collaborative consultation between caregivers and school administrators to infuse family stability, and the utilization of community resources (e.g., counseling, case management) into the academic environment. Researchers address questions of the utilization of consultation and its effectiveness. To address effectiveness, educators have noted the benefits of collaborating among community leaders and mental health professionals for synchronous sharing of resources ([Ainscow et al., 2006](#)).

Children of abuse or neglect may endure multiple factors involved in community violence such as adjustment to socio-political crisis, sexual abuse, domestic violence, a new neighborhood, change in family structure, transfer to a different school, and loss of friends. This study has found an association between community violence and the development of anti-social behavior as a defense mechanisms used by victims. Abused victims who are disengaged from community involvement may lack awareness of community resources (counseling services, support groups, parenting classes, prevention programs, and safe havens from violence). Effective interventions for healthy behaviors can include:

- a) Address adolescents' resilience and performance limitations. Collaborative consultation may be most effective by highlighting adolescents' strengths and effectively working on challenging problems that exert a negative influence on their behavioural patterns.
- b) Provide coping resources. Teachers and all educational stakeholders may establish an effective partnership in the dialogue of teacher, adolescents, parent communication for traumatized youths. Teachers play an essential role in helping adolescents heal from traumatic experiences and in creating a safe school environment for learning.

There is an increased need to address the effects of violence on academic progress and pro-social classroom behavior for at-risk students. Educators and counselors can collaborate to maintain a supportive school environment for students and school personnel. Effectively examining academic and non-academic factors in improving classroom performance may eliminate obstacles and barriers to learning motivation and high school completion. Feelings of safety, stability, and predictability are necessary for youths' academic success. Thus, high-risk students who increase school involvement are more likely to experience positive emotions of inclusion, ultimately leading to academic progress and healthy behaviors.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made based on the research objectives stated in chapter one:

- participants described better policing as a factor which could decrease violence
- Furthermore, participants also recognized a need for intervention programmes in the community with a focus on the community standing together to fight violence. Based on the findings in this study, other possible intervention programmes should also be designed such as those focusing on parenting styles and self as role model. There is a need to combine strategies such as research, psychological interventions as well as promoting better policing strategies, which can combat the community violence on all levels.

9. CONCLUSION

The paramount importance of this subject matter increases as the research findings indicate a general lack of strategic action in the analyzed data. It is essential therefore to identify the problem and adopt appropriate intervention strategies in the various public services meant to care for children, especially the healthcare and education systems. The knowledge of the context in which the child is inserted seems crucial to indicate methods of prevention and abridgment of the negative effects of violence. One must also consider that children who witness family conflicts are often inserted into the civil or criminal justice system.

This factor may affect their psychological development, and therefore requires certain precautions prior to such a reality (Sani, 2008). We could not end this paper without suggesting some guidelines for professionals who deal with the exposure of children to violence. The following are generally required:

- a) professional training for the assessment and identification of cases;
- b) assistance and protection to be provided in the judicial system;
- c) practices adapted consistent with the child's development;
- d) an articulated safety net constructed in collaboration with other agencies and institutions involved in care for at risk children (Maldonado and Williams, 2005; Sani, 2008).

Our findings provide support for the potential buffering effect of parental warmth on psychosocial problems among adolescents, and conversely, they emphasize parental neglect and domestic violence as an important risk factor in adolescent development of anti-social behavior. In view of these findings, encouraging positive and healthy parent-child relationships may be a critical point of intervention for

programs that serve victimized adolescents and their families. Improving supportive family environments may be particularly important for adolescents and families in violent neighborhoods and in cultural contexts that are permissive of interpersonal violence within the family. For example, moving to a lower-crime neighborhood or leaving an abusive home may not be feasible options for at-risk families, but nurturing parental warmth and positive parenting practices can be a worthwhile goal of intervention with all at-risk families. Therefore, family-life education and parent education should emphasize the protective role of parental warmth for reducing a range of negative child outcomes.

Domestic violence affects all people, all over the world. It is important to understand the culture and social beliefs of the families that are involved O'Donnell *et al.* (2002).

Hooyman and Kramer (2006) discuss the importance of cultural consideration and the need to be thoughtful throughout the assessment. These authors give suggestions for preparing for cross-cultural assessment and communication, including the importance of stepping out of your own cultural frame of reference and continue to seek to be more culturally competent (Hooyman and Kramer, 2006). Another suggestion they offer is to look at cultural considerations regarding how it is possibly impacting the therapeutic relationship in a negative way, and consider how a person's culture is a positive and the resilience it has provided to that client. In some cultures, violence may be more tolerated, but according to state laws they are illegal. Understanding the cultural differences is important to be able to assist the victims, abusers, and children appropriately.

Domestic violence continues to be a problem among families. It is clear that exposure to violence places a great burden on children across all developmental stages, as well as cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. It is possible for families exposed to this to overcome the issue and not go on to abuse others. Unfortunately, the effects of family violence are likely to produce long-term intergenerational cycles of abuse if not treated early. Breaking the cycle of violence will require work for the family, community, and all others impacted. Processing a traumatic experience can be therapeutic in itself. Because of the complex nature of children's experiences and trauma, it is imperative that clinicians who work with these children identify their traumatic events, and also look at the child's resiliency.

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