

Influence of Domestic Violence on Senior Secondary School Students' Career Choice in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of domestic violence on senior secondary school students' career choice in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the level of domestic violence and career choice as experienced by the students. Two research questions were raised and one hypothesis was postulated. A descriptive survey type of research design was adopted. The population for this study comprised all senior secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Senior secondary schools were stratified into three senatorial districts and a senatorial district was randomly selected. 450 senior secondary school students formed the target population of which 300 and 150 students were proportionately sampled for public and private senior secondary schools respectively. The results showed that the majority of 82.0% of the secondary school students in the selected senatorial district of Kwara State experienced a moderate level of domestic violence. The result also showed that the level of career choice of the majority of 85.6% of senior secondary school students in Kwara State was high. There was a significant influence of domestic violence on students' career choice, $\chi^2 (n = 450) = 6.945, p < .05$. This study concluded that domestic violence had an adverse influence on the career choice of secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria. It was therefore recommended among others there should be a sensitizing programme for young couples, parents and guardians on how to manage each other against domestic violence and its consequences on homes and students because students are leaders of tomorrow of our society.

KEYWORDS: Domestic violence, senior secondary school, career choice

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The concept of domestic violence refers to a pattern of abusive behaviours that occur within the couples and family ties, involving the beating of one partner, fighting each other, abuse of children and an ill responsible father. (Johnson, 2008). Domestic violence is not limited to physical harm but covers emotional, psychological, and economic abuse; it encompasses all behaviours that create a hostile environment and can deeply affect the well-being of those involved (Coker et al., 2002). Okite (2021) pointed out that the menace of domestic violence within the ambit of cultural perspective in which some socio-cultural groups see the use of force on children and wives as a socially approved measure of discipline, while it actually affects all aspects of their lives. Africans including Nigerians have shared common experience of the extent of the way children have been abused which the government is not happy about. Al-sabawy and Qasim (2022) observe that domestic violence has separated many couples, many marriages have divorced as a result of domestic violence and many children of rich and poor homes have been displaced because of domestic violence. Consequently, he further explains that women also maltreat their husbands especially if they are economically powerful than their husbands.

Provision of Acts to prevent violence against persons either domestically or otherwise is indeed available in Nigeria but the prevalence of domestic violence has been at an alarming rate. Ugwu and Atima (2022) opined that the demise of a popular female singer in Nigeria created awareness of gender-based domestic violence in Nigeria which often involves the women and girl-child. This perhaps may create an impression that male folks in Nigeria are vulnerable or not to the act of domestic violence. The various forms of domestic violence prevalence as reported by Ugwu and Atima (2022) pointed out that physical violence rose to fourteen percent (14%), female genital mutilation reached nineteen percent (19.2%), and child marriage is equally forty percent (40%). Physical, sexual and emotional violence has taken the lead of sixty-nine percent (69%) in the year 2020. Kelani (2023) expressed that over 47 women died because of husband brutality since January 2023. She also said that many of the casualties as a result of domestic violence were also reported when some identified ones were prosecuted and tried in a court of law. On the other hand, she said that the rate of domestic violence and most especially wife battering in Nigeria is worrisome and denting the national image.

Bolaji (2024) reported 5,624 cases of domestic violence were reported and filled by the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) from the year 2022 to 2023, among the victims of various cases of domestic and sexual violence that were reported were 18 years old baby and 79 years old woman. The Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) (2024) also out of 2,543 abuse cases reported, 1,108 of the cases were men. Ogunyemi and Aborisade (2023) opined that most cases reported to the court of law indicated that men are adequately responsible for their responsibilities at home, while some men share responsibilities with their wives at home Adeleke (2024) remarked that the cases of domestic violence against men are largely undisclosed in Nigeria thereby creating an impression that women population is mostly suffered of the act.

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Al-sabawy and Qasim (2022) identified the desire for power and control over the victims in order to exert dominance in the relationship through physical, emotional, or psychological forces as the sources of domestic violence. Individuals who socialize in domestic violent environments may learn that domestic violence is a normal way of life to resolve conflicts. Rudy, Porrs & Burke (2020) further identified that cultural norms, traditional roles and unequal power reinforce domestic violence in society. Agbolahan (2020) observed another dimension to the causes of domestic violence these include, financial stress, economic hardship, substance abuse, economic dependence and financial constraints which could lead to frustration, tension, anxiety and at climax aggressive behaviours which are exhibited in the process of domestic violence.

Domestic violence can be classified into three levels based on the frequency of abusive behaviours. These categories are low, moderate, and high levels of domestic violence. Low-level domestic violence typically includes less severe forms of abuse like verbal threats, intimidation, controlling behaviour, and occasional minor physical aggression. If not addressed, this level often escalates into more serious abuse (Taylor, Munford & Aalsma 2022). Moderate-level domestic violence involves more frequent and intense acts of abuse, such as regular physical violence, sustained emotional abuse, and coercive control. Victims at this level often suffer significant psychological and emotional harm (Rasool 2022). High-level domestic violence is characterized by severe and life-threatening abuse, such as chronic physical violence, sexual assault, extreme psychological manipulation, and threats of homicide. Victims in this category face imminent danger and require urgent intervention (Swan, Habib & Smith, 2019).

McLean Hospital (2024) described the influence of domestic violence on the victims as chronic pain, sexual assault and of course the death of one partner as a of victimization. Bentil et al (2024) observed that the increase in domestic violence in society leads to a decrease in the academic performance of students across board. Domestic violence is capable of exerting a negative influence on many aspects of learners' undertakings such as academic performance, choice of career, educational aspiration and other learning engagement. This study is interested in what happens to the student's choice of career as a result of domestic violence. Howard et al (2019) opined that the trauma and stress associated with domestic violence are the catalysts that could make students lose focus in the process of their career pursuits. Similarly, Abdulaziz, Balogun & Iyekolo, (2018) added that the emotional turmoil from domestic violence contributes to mental health challenges like anxiety and depression, which may further hinder students' choice of career in life. Consequently, all aforementioned domestic violence factors affect students directly or indirectly in their career choices.

Collins Could Dictionary defines career choice as a profession of an individual that engages in for a long period of time. Editorial Team (2024) categorized career as a profession, occupation, trade or vocation of a person or persons that determine their future. On the other hand, it may also imply the progress and action of an individual throughout the working years of his or her life. This covers a variety of jobs done, acquired titles etc. The focus of this paper is on students' career choices as a result of educational training that determines their future. The editorial team described students' career choice as the key element of students' life and pathway to a successful professional journey.

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The academy opined that the successful students in school possess advantages over others who are academically backward. For example, good grade in science subjects is required for choices like medicine, pharmacy and engineering courses. This may turn to other way round if poor grade is acquired in science subjects, then the students' self-goal of being a medical doctor or an engineer may not be achieved. Moses (2024) described career choice as a difficult situation for students to make up their minds about the profession, they intend to pursue for their lives. The students' difficulty in making decisions about career choices may be based on the factors associated with the issues of domestic violence.

Nwanneka et al (2022) identified numerous factors like personality interest, self-concept, cultural identity, globalization, socialization, role model, and social support which influence the career choice of students. Adeyele, (2021) opined that a particular student who did well in his/her senior secondary school certificate examination could not advance to tertiary institutions due to her parents' unresolved separation as a result of domestic violence. Similarly, Stark et al (2022) observed that those students living under domestic violence at home are prone to disengage from educational institutions thereby affecting their future career adventure. This is also buttressed by Howard (2019) that in-school adolescents who are exposed to domestic violence are often confronted with ill emotion, cognitive malfunctioning, difficulty in concentration, memory impairment, and reduced problem-solving abilities because of misunderstandings experienced by the parents. Understanding career choices in terms of low and high levels can help in assessing their societal implications, individual fulfillment, and economic opportunities available within different professions. Career choice can be categorized based on their varying impact or significance within society, specifically into low and high levels. A low level of career choice is typically involved in selecting less prestigious careers that receive lower societal recognition or have a reduced impact. These professions may be less visible and undervalued in terms of societal status and economic rewards. (Okafor, 2020). Said that high-level career choices are characterized by careers perceived as prestigious, influential, or highly impactful in society. These professions usually demand advanced education, and specialized skills, and are associated with higher societal status and economic benefits (Smith & Jones, 2020). Said that the students may aspire for their second category of career choice because they have an interest in the acquisition of specialized skills under the context of schooling.

Al-sabawy and Qassim (2023) pointed out that domestic violence in Nigeria is worrisome to all and sundry because it is affecting the educational career choice of students. Exposure to domestic violence led to a range of social difficulties, including challenges in forming and maintaining peer relationships because feelings of shame or embarrassment can impede interaction, social skills development, ability to collaborate, communicate, and engage in group activities with peers within the school context (Holden & Barker 2021). Said that vulnerable groups, such as low-income students or those from marginalized communities, might face additional barriers to accessing resources that could mitigate the influence of domestic violence (Kandakai-Olukemi, 2022).

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Domestic violence remain a pervasive issue that affecting various aspect of family life, In Kwara State, Nigeria. It has significant implications for the development and future prospects of young individuals. Senior secondary school students at a critical juncture in their educational journey are particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of domestic violence. This period is crucial for making career choices that shape their future aspirations. In another view, the students exposed to domestic violence may lead to having experienced emotional, psychological, and physical trauma which could hinder their academic performance in school, self-esteem, and ability to make substantive career decisions.

Despite this acknowledgement, the importance of a stable and supportive home environment for academic success and career planning, there is a paucity of empirical research exploring how domestic violence influences the career choice of senior secondary school students in Kwara State. For example, Adeyele, and Makinde, (2021) studied the prevalence of domestic violence among children. Agbolahan (2020) examined the effects of single parenthood as caused by domestic violence and the development of the child. Ajayi, (2015) investigated the prevalence and consequences of domestic violence on the school child's academic performance in Nigeria. Al-sabawy and Qassim, (2023) examined domestic violence and its impact on the academic achievement of students. Despite the focus of many aforementioned researches on domestic violence, they are not particularly concerned about the career choice of the students and are not conducted within the locale of this study.

This research sought to address this gap by investigating the extent to which domestic violence influences the career choices of senior secondary school students in Kwara State. Understanding this relationship is vital for developing targeted interventions and support systems to assist affected students in overcoming these challenges and achieving their full potential.

1.1 Theoretical framework

There are many theories that explain the issues relating to domestic violence and career choice. Two theories were found useful for this study, they are strain theory and conflict theory. Strain theory postulated by Merton 1910-2003 considered the existence of the social structural disjuncture between socially desired goals and the means for achieving those goals. This disjuncture produces a social-psychological strain within the individual, who is then forced to escape the strain through various adaptations. The issue of domestic violence fits into this theory because it constitutes a sort of strain for students that may disjoint them from achieving their career choice goals. Merton suggested five adaptation mechanisms towards strained experience, these include conformity, ritualism, innovation, retreatism, and rebellion. It later becomes a therapeutic measure for the student to control the influence of domestic violence on their choice of career (Nirula et al, 2024).

Conflict theory is associated with Karl Marx's social theory of class struggle which postulated society as a state of perpetual conflict because of people's rivalry over meager economic and political resources. This simply implies that individuals and groups will contend to maximize wealth and power despite few available resources. This theory is relevant in this study because it

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shed light on possible causes of domestic violence that could be rooted in attempts to exert control and maintain peace between the parents at home to avoid negative influence on children (students) (Hayes, 2024).

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of domestic violence on students' educational career choice aspirations in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, this study:

1. examine the level of domestic violence experienced by secondary school students in Kwara State;
2. examine the level of career choice of secondary school students in Kwara State; and
3. determine the influence of domestic violence on students' career choice in Kwara State.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated for this study

1. What is the level of domestic violence experienced by secondary school students in Kwara State?
2. What is the level of career choice of secondary school students in Kwara State?

1.4 Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant influence of domestic violence on students' career choice in Kwara State.

2.0 METHODS

2.1 Study Design and Participants

The study adopted descriptive survey research that focuses on the analysis of domestic violence in Kwara state, Nigeria. The population for this study comprised all senior secondary school students in Kwara State. Senior secondary schools were stratified into three senatorial districts and a senatorial district was randomly selected. 10 public and 5 private secondary schools were proportionately sampled. Four hundred and fifty (450) senior secondary school students formed the target population which 300 and 150 students were proportionately sampled for public and private senior secondary schools respectively in the selected senatorial district. Thirty (30) students were selected across the three arms of SSS I, II, and III of each selected 15 senior secondary schools. 450 respondents were justified given the descriptive design of this study to reduce the margin of errors, leading to more reliable and valid results. A proportionate sampling technique

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was used due to an imbalance in the population of schools and students which is higher in public schools than in private schools.

2.2 Research Instrument

The researcher designed a questionnaire titled “Influence of Domestic Violence on Student’s Career Choice Questionnaire (IDVSCCQ). The questionnaire has three sections. Section A explored the level of domestic violence, Section B examined levels of students’ career choice. To determine the levels of violence, the items under section A of the instrument were scored based on the three ranges of 20-40 as low level, 41-60 as moderate level and 61-80 as high level. Similarly, section C of the instrument was scored based on the two ranges of 20-50 as a low level of career choice and 51-80 as a high level of career choice. Section C contained 20 items that investigated the influence of domestic violence on students’ career choice. Response to the 20 items were structured in four scale-Likert-type of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by two professors of Sociology and Social Studies Education respectively in the Social Sciences Education Department (SSE), University of Ilorin. Their observations and suggestions were incorporated to prepare a final copy that was administered to the respondents. To ensure that the instrument was reliable, copies of the instrument were administered to 40 public and private senior secondary school students in Oyo State and subjected to the test of internal consistency using K-R 20. A reliability coefficient of 0.96 was obtained which made the instrument to be reliable.

2.3 Procedure

The researchers having gotten approval from the selected school authority, the questionnaire was administered with the help of the respondents’ teachers who coordinated students properly to fill the questionnaire. The Researcher visited the principals of the senior secondary schools selected to seek permission for access to their various classrooms. The researcher with the aid of research assistants went around the selected schools to administer the questionnaire. The data collected through the instrument were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentages were adopted to answer research questions 1 and 2 while a Chi-Square was used to test the formulated research hypothesis at alpha level 0.5.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Research Question 1: What is the level of domestic violence experienced by secondary school students in Kwara State?

In order to determine the three levels of domestic violence as experienced by the senior secondary school students. The researcher considered the levels on the range of scoring of 20-40 for low domestic violence which is less severe, 41-60 for moderate domestic violence which is more frequent and intent, and 61-80 for high domestic violence which is severe and life threatening. Items in section A of the research instrument produced data that were analyzed and presented as follows

Table 1: Level of Domestic Violence Experienced by Secondary School Students

Level of Domestic Violence	Score Range	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low	20-40	38	8.4
Moderate	41- 60	369	82.0
High	61-80	43	9.6
Total		450	100.0

Score rating ranges between 20 and 80.

Table 1 shows the level of domestic violence experienced by secondary school students in Kwara State. Results in Table 1 showed the level of domestic violence experienced by secondary school students in Kwara State. The table revealed that out of 450 (100.0%) of the senior secondary school students that were participated in the study, 38(8.1%) had experienced a low level of domestic violence, 369 (82.0%) had experienced a moderate level of domestic violence while 43 (9.6%) of the students had experienced a high level of domestic violence. It can thus be observed that the majority of the secondary school students sampled in the study had experienced a moderate level of domestic violence. This implies that the senior secondary school students in Kwara State had been exposed to domestic violence that is more frequent and intent. It is equally observed that the frequency of those experiencing high domestic violence is second in the category. It is possible to say more frequency of domestic violence at a moderate level eventually translated to the high level when it wasn't checked.

3.2 Research Question 2: What is the level of career choice of secondary school students in Kwara State?

In order to determine the two levels of career choice as experienced by the senior secondary school students. The researcher considered the level on the range of scoring of 20-50 for a low career choice that is less prestigious, visible or undervalued while 51-80 for a high career choice that is prestigious or highly impactful. Items in section B of the research instrument produced data that were analyzed and presented as follows:

Table 2: Level of Career Choice of Secondary School Students in Kwara State.

Level of Career Choice	Score Range	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low	20-50	65	14.4
High	51-80	385	85.6
Total		450	100.0

Score rating ranges between 20 and 80.

Table 2 shows the level of career choice of the secondary school students in Kwara State. The result in Table 2 shows the level of career choice of the secondary school students in Kwara State. The table revealed that out of 450 (100.0%) of the senior secondary school students who participated in the study, 65 (14.4%) had expressed a low level of career choice while 385 (85.6%) of the students had expressed a high level of career choice. It can thus be observed that the majority of the secondary school students sampled in the study had an interest in selecting careers that are prestigious and highly impactful. However, the majority of moderate experience of domestic violence as shown in Table 1 may be a serious constraint to achieving this high level of career choice.

Testing of Research Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant influence of domestic violence on students' career choice in Kwara State.

The third purpose of this study is to correspond to only the generated hypothesis for this study. Therefore, it was tested using the Chi-Square test of independence since both dependent and independent variables had been categorized. 0.05 level of confidence was adopted.

Table 3: Chi-Square of Test of Significant Influence of Domestic Violence on Students' Career Choice.

Level of Domestic Violence	Level of Career Choice		$\chi^2(2)$
	Low	High	
	n	n	
Low	2	36	
Moderate	52	317	6.945*
High	11	32	

* $p < .05$ ($p = .031$)

Table 3 shows the influence of domestic violence on students' career choice in Kwara State. Results in Table 3 showed the influence of domestic violence on students' career choice in Kwara State. The outcome showed that the level of domestic violence had a significant influence on students' career choice, $\chi^2 (n = 450) = 6.945, p < .05$. This result indicated strong evidence against the stated null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of domestic violence on students' career choice in Kwara State. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis suggested that there is a significant influence of domestic violence on students' career choice in Kwara State.

4.0 DISCUSSION

The first finding of this study revealed that a vast majority of 82.0% of the secondary school students sampled in Kwara State experienced a moderate level of domestic violence. In other words, the finding implied the existence of domestic violence in the households or communities where the students reside. Consequently, the prevalence and experience of domestic violence by the students is more frequent and intent. This result is in line with the category of domestic violence suggested by Capaldi and Kim (2007) that the moderate level of domestic violence involves more frequent and intense acts of abuse, such as regular physical violence, sustained emotional abuse, and coercive control. It is observed that if the students still experiencing moderate domestic violence in society and nothing is being done to curb it by providing solutions on time they may run into a high level of domestic violence that is characterized by severity and life-threatening because they are already under significant psychological and emotional pressure of moderate domestic violence.

Findings of this study also revealed that the majority of 85.6% of the senior secondary school students on a high level of career choice. This finding implies that the majority of the students aimed very high in the pursuit of prestigious and highly impactful careers in the future. This position is justifiable according to the submission of Smith and Jones (2020) that high-level career choices are characterized by careers perceived as prestigious, influential, or highly impactful in

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society. Students would aim for high demand for advanced and specialized skills that would earn them higher societal status and economic benefits. This result is contrary to the outcome of the former result about the moderate level of domestic violence that students experienced. The chances of students achieving high career choices in view of this moderate level of domestic violence are less guaranteed. This does not indicate a positive sign as far as the future career of the students is concerned. This is because the increase in the domestic violence experienced by the students means a decrease in their academic performance that will help them to decide future careers with sound mindset and cognitive ability.

Furthermore, the findings of the study revealed that there was a significant influence of domestic violence on students' career choice. This is not good enough because high or moderate levels of exposure to domestic violence can hinder students from doing well to achieve better grades to make high choices of career. This result is in line with the observation of Al- sabawy and Qassim (2023) who pointed out that the issue of domestic violence in Nigeria is worrisome to all and sundry because it is affecting the educational career choice of students. It can be seen that violent homes, environments, and conditions of family have negative influences on the academic engagement of children at school and subsequently affect their career choice adversely. In most cases, a warm, friendly and supportive environment tends to motivate students with a resultant positive effect on their academic performance, whereas; a home and environment filled with hostility tends to distract students from concentrating on learning. Students living and learning in a hostile environment are denied the needed support and motivation. In most cases, the academic performance of students living in such a condition suffers.

A lack of adequate support and motivation usually results in poor academic performance. Good academic performance is a pre-condition for aiming high in terms of educational attainment goals which the student sets to achieve. The findings of the study corroborate with the findings of Holden and Barker (2021) who that exposure to domestic violence leads to a range of social difficulties, including challenges in forming and maintaining peer relationships because feelings of shame or embarrassment can affect interaction, social skills development, and ability to collaborate, communicate, and engage in group activities with peers within the school context. Similarly, the observation of Howard (2019) pointed out that school adolescents who are exposed to domestic violence are often confronted with ill emotion, cognitive malfunctioning, difficulty in concentration, memory impairment, and reduced problem-solving abilities because of misunderstanding, fighting, kicking, sudden death and many more are experiencing from the parents by the children.

4.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that despite the moderate level of exposure to domestic violence among secondary school students. Domestic violence still had an adverse influence on students' high choice of careers in Kwara State, Nigeria. On the outcomes of this study the following recommendations are made:

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1. Mass media should be used by both federal, state and local governments to discourage the problem of domestic violence at home, within the family setting and the society at large.
2. The school management and the community leaders should from time to time engage in sensitization programmes through selfless services by improving social interaction among the members of the society by showing love for each other so that the entire society would move forward by doing so, students would be enabled to choose their career.
3. Counsellors should be employed to engage students with relevant knowledge, skills and motivation on the importance of setting a high and realistic educational goal in their lives. They should make students aware that having a target for a high career might not be enough to realize but they need courage and perseverance to deemphasize their domestic problems while schooling.
4. There is the need for prompt settlement of quarrelling between couples to avert all sorts of domestic abuse at home in order to prevent the significant influence of domestic violence on students' academic engagement and eventual career choice.

DECLARATION

Author's contribution: This publication was written in collaboration with three authors from the beginning to the end, Dr. Rashid worked on the background of the research, Dr Abdulaziz worked on the methodology and references of this research, and Dr. Okafor analyzed the data respectively.

Ethical Statement: The instruments used were validated appropriately and the selection of the sample was free from bias.

Data availability: Data were collected through the instrument and the information given was based on the population of the respondents.

Consent Declaration: Permission was sought from the Dean of faculty of education to have access to the sampled senior secondary schools selected especially, those students in SSS I, II and III because they have stayed in the school for the period of time.

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