

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA



**THE IMPLICATIONS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON THE
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN SELECTED
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN BAWJIASE**

ESTHERLA QUANSAH

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IN BAWJIASE**

**ESTHERLA QUANSAH
(8230230002)**

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Human Rights, Conflict and Peace Studies)**

**Centre for Conflict, Human Rights and Peace Studies,
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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Estherla Quansah, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work and have not been submitted either in part or whole, for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

Signature:

Date:

Supervisor's Declaration

I declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis was supervised by me in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of project work laid down by the University of Education, Winneba

Name of Supervisor: MR CLETUS NGAASO

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

I humbly dedicated this work to the loving memory of my beloved late grandmother, Hanna Nana Adowa Eseaba Kyeah and my beloved late father, Edward Quansah. Your unwavering love, sacrifices, guidance and prayers laid the foundation for who I am today. Though you are no longer physically present, your values, strength and encouragement continue to inspire me in every step of this journey. This achievement is a reflection of the seeds you planted in my life.

I also dedicate this work to God Almighty, the source of wisdom, strength and grace. Through every challenge and triumph, His faithfulness sustained me and made this accomplishment possible.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

AWDF	African Women's Development Fund
CDC	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
JHS	Junior High School
NCDV	National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
NIMH	National Institute of Mental Health
NSVRC	National Sexual Violence Resource Centre
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UN-Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WHO	World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

Domestic violence is a pervasive problem affecting individuals and communities globally. The study examined the relationship between domestic violence and academic performance. The study was based on pragmatic philosophy and followed a sequential mixed-methods design. It targeted a population of 12 to 17-year-old students who have been exposed to or have witnessed domestic violence. The sample involved 39 students and 8 educators (counsellors and teachers). Instruments involved structured questionnaires for quantitative data and interviews with teachers and counsellors for qualitative data. It also utilised SPSS and Excel for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative findings to ensure full comprehension of the domestic violence and academic achievement relationship. The findings suggest that domestic violence poses a serious challenge for Junior High School students in Bawjiase, particularly younger female students who are most susceptible to physical and emotional abuse. Although older students develop coping mechanisms, they continue to experience long-term psychological consequences. Emotional distress and difficulty concentrating contribute to disengagement from learning, even though academic performance is not directly affected. This underscores the need for schools to prioritize emotional well-being as a key factor in academic success by implementing targeted support systems. While some students seek professional assistance or rely on personal resilience, limited access to mental health services remains a significant obstacle. Given the high level of domestic violence among Junior High School students, particularly for females within the 13–15 age groups, this study proposes the need for early intervention and protection programs to increase awareness and reduce the incidence of violence against Junior High School students, as well as to improve their quality of life.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Domestic violence, a pervasive issue affecting individuals and communities globally (World Health Organization, 2023), has increasingly been acknowledged for its profound effects on victims' academic achievements (Njoroge et al., 2023; Okite, 2021; Tsegba, 2021).

This form of violence encompasses a range of abusive behaviours within intimate relationships, including physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023). Physical abuse involves acts of violence causing bodily harm, such as hitting or kicking (National Coalition against Domestic Violence, 2024), while sexual abuse involves coercive or non-consensual sexual activities (National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2024). Emotional abuse consists of verbal attacks, manipulation, or threats aimed at undermining the victim's self-worth and independence (National Domestic Violence Hotline, 2024), while psychological abuse includes tactics like gaslighting or isolation, which can severely impact mental health (MentalHealth.gov, 2024).

The detrimental consequences of domestic violence extend to children, significantly affecting their academic performance (Njoroge et al., 2023; Okite, 2021; Tsegba, 2021). This correlation reflects a complex interplay between various aspects of child development and the traumatic experiences associated with domestic violence (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023). Evidence indicates that children exposed to domestic violence may experience adverse effects on their cognitive development, emotional health, and social adjustment, all of which have implications for their

academic performance (Njoroge et al., 2023; Okite, 2021; Tsegba, 2021). Witnessing or being subjected to domestic violence can alleviate stress levels, induce anxiety, and inflict trauma (National Institute of Mental Health, 2024), impairing cognitive functions like concentration, memory, and problem-solving skills necessary for academic success (Njoroge et al., 2023). Moreover, the instability and disrupted family dynamics associated with domestic violence can disrupt daily routines, increase absenteeism, and impede the formation of positive peer relationships, further compromising educational outcomes for affected students (Okite, 2021).

Recognizing the intricate connections between different facets of domestic violence and their impacts on children's academic achievements is vital for devising tailored interventions and support services to meet their needs effectively (Njoroge et al., 2023; Okite, 2021; Tsegba, 2021). Domestic violence has persisted across time and regions, transcending cultural and geographical boundaries (World Health Organization, 2023). Its prevalence is rooted, in part, in entrenched gender disparities and societal norms that perpetuate power imbalances and normalise abusive behaviours within intimate partnerships (United Nations Women, 2023). Traditional gender roles and societal expectations often contribute to the justification and acceptance of domestic violence, perpetuating its harmful cycle (World Health Organization, 2023).

In Africa, including Ghana, domestic violence remains a pervasive issue deeply entrenched in historical and cultural contexts. Traditional gender norms, as elucidated by scholars such as Jewkes (2016) and Owusu (2001), often grant men greater authority and control within familial structures, rendering women and children especially susceptible to abuse. Awareness and efforts to combat domestic violence have grown in recent years, driven by a heightened understanding of its detrimental consequences

for individuals and communities (World Health Organization, 2023). Various advocacy endeavours, grassroots initiatives, and the work of civil society organisations, as documented by entities like the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), have been instrumental in raising awareness, challenging societal norms (Moser & Moser, 2005), and providing support to survivors (UN Women, 2022).

In Ghana, legislative measures have been implemented to address domestic violence, exemplified by the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act of 2007, which criminalises diverse forms of abuse and extends legal safeguards to victims. Furthermore, advocacy campaigns and educational programs have aimed to foster gender equality, challenge harmful stereotypes, and empower survivors to seek assistance and assistance (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). Nonetheless, despite these strides, obstacles persist in effectively combating domestic violence. These hurdles encompass limited access to resources and support services (Human Rights Watch, 2023), cultural impediments to reporting abuse (Jewkes, 2016), and deficiencies in the enforcement and execution of extant laws and policies (UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020).

Effectively addressing domestic violence necessitates a holistic approach that targets underlying structural disparities (Institute of Development Studies, 2011), advocates for gender-sensitive policies and initiatives (UN Women, 2022), and offers comprehensive assistance to survivors (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, n.d.). Through fostering cooperation among governmental bodies, civil society groups, and local communities (Afrobarometer, 2023), a more inclusive and supportive atmosphere can be established, prioritising the safety and welfare of all

individuals and working towards the elimination of domestic violence both in Ghana and globally (Ghana Statistical Service, 2023).

Scholarly research consistently underscores the detrimental impact of domestic violence on children's academic performance (Finkelhor et al., 2015; Kim & Jang, 2020). Exposure to domestic violence correlates with heightened rates of absenteeism (Edwidge et al., 2019), diminished concentration in the classroom (Jouri et al., 2018), behavioural challenges (Malik & Shah, 2017), and decreased academic attainment (Carrell & Hoekstra, 2016). Furthermore, the emotional distress and trauma stemming from domestic violence impede students' effective engagement in learning activities (Husain et al., 2012) and contribute to enduring academic struggles (Elliott et al., 2009). An understanding of the specific mechanisms through which domestic violence impacts students' academic performance is vital for devising tailored interventions and support services to effectively meet their needs (Fry & Mackenzie, 2017).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Students are expected to thrive in safe and supportive learning environments, as such conditions significantly influence their academic success and overall development (Darling-Hammond, 2010). However, for many children, the home environment does not provide this foundation. Instead, exposure to domestic violence creates psychological distress, emotional instability and behavioural challenges that interfere with concentration, classroom participation and academic progression. This situation raises serious concerns about the ability of affected students to achieve their educational potential.

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated a negative relationship between domestic violence and students' academic performance. For instance, Njoroge et al. (2023) found that primary school pupils exposed to domestic violence in Kenya recorded lower academic achievement and reduced school engagement. Similarly, Okite (2021) reported that domestic violence among households in Uganda adversely affected pupils' cognitive focus and school participation. These studies, however, were conducted outside Ghana, raising concerns about the applicability of their findings to the Ghanaian socio-cultural and educational context.

Within Ghana, available studies confirm that domestic violence is a relevant educational concern. Ghanney and Mensah (2007), in a case study in Kasoa in the Central Region, revealed that children from violent homes exhibited poor academic performance and irregular school attendance. Likewise, Quansah (2016) found that domestic abuse negatively affected both the academic self-perception and psychosocial well-being of Junior High School pupils in the Moree community. Boateng (2017) also reported that pupils in basic schools in the Kumasi Metropolis perceived domestic violence as having disruptive effects on their school life and personal development. While these Ghanaian studies provide valuable insights, most relied on limited case study designs, small samples or perception-based approaches, thereby restricting the depth of evidence on how domestic violence concretely influences academic outcomes.

Consequently, despite existing scholarship, there remains a methodological and contextual gap in Ghanaian literature regarding comprehensive and empirically robust investigations into the link between domestic violence and students' academic performance. This gap limits the availability of context-specific evidence needed to

inform educational policies, school-based interventions and child protection strategies. Therefore, the study seeks to examine the effects of domestic violence on students' academic performance within the Ghanaian context, providing deeper empirical insights to support the development of safer and more nurturing learning environments.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study examine the implication of demestic violences on the academic performances of JHS students, also the coping. Also, the coping strategies of victims of domestic violence were explored to cater for the content deficit.

1.4 Research Objectives

The study sought to achieve the following specific objectives.

1. To assess the domestic violence experienced by students in selected Junior High Schools in Bawjiase.
2. To establish the relationship between domestic violence and academic performance in selected Junior High Schools in Bawjiase.
3. To explore the coping strategies used by students to deal with domestic violence experiences.

1.5 Research Questions

The following were the questions that guided the study

1. What forms of domestic violence are experienced by students in selected Junior High Schools in Bawjiase?
2. How does domestic violence correlate with academic performance among students in selected Junior High Schools in Bawjiase?
3. What coping strategies do students in selected Junior High Schools in Bawjiase employ to address experiences of domestic violence?

1.6 Research Hypothesis

The study was guided by the following hypotheses.

H1: Domestic violence has a significant effect on the academic performance of students in selected Junior High Schools in Bawjiase.

H2: School attendance plays a mediating role in the relationship between domestic violence and academic performance of students in selected Junior High Schools in Bawjiase.

1.7 Delimitations

The study focused on exploring the implications of domestic violence on the academic performance of students in three specific Junior High Schools located in the Bawjiase community of Ghana's Central region. The selected schools were Bawjiase Methodist School, Okwabena SDA School and Fianko D/A JHS. These schools were deliberately chosen for several reasons. Firstly, they represent the typical Junior High School (JHS) education system in Bawjiase, providing an accurate representation of the local educational context. Secondly, the schools granted permission and approval for the research to be conducted within their premises, obtained after providing detailed information about the research, objectives, methodology, and potential benefits as well as ensuring that all necessary ethical protocols were in place. Furthermore, one of the schools, Okwabena SDA JHS had an existing partnership with a local non-governmental organisation (Ideal Women's Foundation) that provided support services for victims of domestic violence, providing access to additional resources, expertise and support. Finally, the schools were conveniently located, allowing for easy access and communication with participants, teachers, counsellors and administrators, which facilitated the establishment of trust and rapport with the school community. Ultimately, the findings of this study can inform the development of targeted

interventions and support services on academic performance in these schools and similar settings.

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study has significant implications for stakeholders at Bawjiase Junior High School, especially through the application of resilient theory. By examining how domestic violence influences students' academic performance, educators and school leaders can more effectively identify at-risk students and implement personalised support systems and interventions. Resilient theory enhances this understanding by investigating how affected students use coping strategies to navigate academic and personal challenges, identifying effective methods that build resilience and mitigate negative educational outcomes.

Additionally, the research offers important insights for parents and families of Bawjiase Junior High School students, demonstrating the profound impact of domestic violence on academic success. With this awareness, parents can access appropriate support services and strategies to minimise the harmful effects of domestic violence on their children's education and overall well-being. Collaboration among educators, administrators, parents, and support services can facilitate a comprehensive approach to enhancing academic achievement and emotional well-being despite domestic challenges.

Furthermore, the study's findings are crucial for shaping policies and practices concerning domestic violence in educational settings. Policymakers and advocacy groups can use this knowledge to advocate for targeted resources and services tailored to schools facing high rates of domestic violence. This informed approach can lead to safer and more supportive learning environments that benefit all students.

Moreover, community organisations and support services gain valuable insights to customise their interventions specifically for Bawjiase students and families affected by domestic violence. By adapting their support strategies to address these challenges, these organisations can offer targeted assistance that promotes academic success and overall resilience among those affected.

In conclusion, integrating resilient theory into the study of domestic violence's impact on students not only advances understanding of its immediate and long-term effects on academic performance but also encourages collaboration across disciplines like education, psychology, sociology, and public health. This interdisciplinary approach aims to implement compassionate, trauma-informed practices in educational settings and support sustained well-being for students facing domestic violence.

1.9 Definition of Terms

The following key terms were defined in context of the study.

Domestic violence: Domestic violence involves any recurring behaviour within a relationship aimed at gaining or exerting power and control over an intimate partner. It can take different forms such as physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological abuse.

Academic performance: Academic performance encompasses a student's accomplishments in educational activities, including grades, exam results, attendance, and overall participation in class. It reflects the student's level of understanding and proficiency across academic subjects.

Students: Those who regularly attend school, typically at the elementary level. In this study, students specifically refer to students enrolled in Junior High Schools in Bawjiase.

1.10 Organization of the Study

The study was organised into five chapters. Chapter one set the stage by discussing the background and context of the research, focusing on how domestic violence affected the academic performance of students in Bawjiase High schools. This chapter covered the problem statement, objectives, significance, scope, and organisation of the study. Chapter two explored the literature review, beginning with the examination of important concepts related to domestic violence. Subsequently, the chapter presented the underlying theory of the study, reviewed empirical studies and presented a conceptual framework. Chapter three explained the methods used in the study, including the research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection technique, data analysis technique, and ethical considerations. In chapter four, the study presented its findings, interpreted them, and discussed their implications in light of existing literature on domestic violence and academic performance. Finally, Chapter five summarised the findings, drew conclusions, and provided recommendations for addressing domestic violence and its effects on academic performance. It also provided policy implications and suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Chapter two offered a thorough examination of previous research related to how domestic violence affects academic performance. It was divided into three key parts: conceptual review, theoretical review, and empirical review. Furthermore, a conceptual framework was created from the insights gained in the literature review, providing a roadmap for analysing the relationship between the variables or concepts.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Domestic violence

The concept of domestic violence encompasses a range of definitions, reflecting its complex nature. While reaching a consensus on its definition remains challenging, domestic violence is universally recognized as a form of dysfunction within the home environment. The term "domestic" originates from the Latin word "domus," meaning home or dwelling place (Tony, 2002). According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2002), violence involves the intentional use of physical force or power, whether actual or threatened, resulting in various forms of harm. Therefore, domestic violence can be interpreted as violence occurring within the home setting. Scholars offer diverse interpretations of domestic violence, with slight variations depending on individual perspectives.

Hester (2006) argued that domestic violence arises from one party's desire to dominate and control the other within a relationship. UNICEF (2014) described domestic violence as victimisation inflicted by an abuser upon an individual with whom they share or have shared an intimate, romantic, or spousal relationship. Adams (2001) views

domestic violence as a pattern of behaviour involving physical, psychological, and/or emotional abuse directed at an intimate partner.

Despite some definitions focusing on women, domestic violence refers to any form of abuse or coercion within the home environment resulting in distress, injury, undue control, or domination over others. Benedictis et al. (2016) categorised domestic violence into various forms, including physical, verbal, sexual, stalking, economic, and spiritual abuse. Domestic violence can have significant psychological and emotional consequences, such as depression, substance abuse, low self-esteem, withdrawal, poor academic performance, and increased rates of high school dropout among students.

Domestic violence remains a pervasive issue with significant prevalence across various contexts. While Western societies have seen increased research on its impact on children, most African countries lack comprehensive studies on the subject. In many African settings, domestic violence is often viewed as a private family matter, inhibiting external interventions (Aihie, 2009). Project Alert (2004) highlighted high prevalence rates of domestic violence among women in Lagos State, Nigeria, with a considerable portion experiencing abuse from their partners. Alabi and Oni (2017) identified multiple forms of domestic violence, including physical, economic, emotional, and psychological, prevalent in homes in Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State. Obi and Ozumba (2007) discovered that a majority of participants in Southeast Nigeria reported abuse in their homes, primarily targeting female partners, with common forms including shouting, slapping, pushing, punching, and kicking. Furthermore, research indicates that exposure to domestic violence adversely affects children's academic success, leading to trauma reactions and academic difficulties (Commission on Academic Success for Boston Children, 2006).

2.1.2 Academic performance

Academic performance encompasses more than just high grades, according to experts (Brookhart, 2017). While grades matter, they do not tell the whole story of academic excellence. The foundation of academic success lies in how students acquire knowledge (Brookhart, 2017). It is not just about memorization; rather deeply understanding information, grasping complex concepts, and retaining what's been learned over time (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Successful students do not just absorb information; they critically engage with it, spotting patterns, connections, and implications beyond the textbook (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Additionally, excelling academically means mastering skills that go beyond any single subject (Brookhart, 2017). Critical thinking, for instance, lets students analyse information, evaluate arguments, and make informed judgments (Facione, 1990). Problem-solving skills help them tackle tough challenges creatively and effectively (Sternberg, 1999), while strong communication skills let them express ideas clearly and persuasively (National Governors Association Centre for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). These skills are not just crucial for academic success; they are essential for navigating today's complex, interconnected world (World Economic Forum, 2016).

Moreover, a student's academic performance is not just about their abilities; it is also influenced by their learning environment (Yousefi, 2013). Quality instruction, clear explanations, relevant content, and available support all affect how engaged and comprehending students are (Yousefi, 2013). Access to resources like libraries, technology, and academic support services can also impact performance by providing necessary tools for learning and research (Yousefi, 2013). Additionally, the overall

atmosphere within educational institutions, including factors like safety, inclusivity, and community support, can significantly impact student well-being and, consequently, academic performance (Yousefi, 2013).

Achieving academic excellence is not just about gaining knowledge and honing skills; it is also about embracing a mindset that values critical thinking and curiosity (Dweck, 2006). When students can critically analyse and think laterally, they can tackle problems from various angles and generate innovative solutions (Dweck, 2006). Intellectual curiosity propels students to delve into new ideas, seek out challenging opportunities, and delve deeper into subjects that interest them (Dweck, 2006).

Furthermore, adopting a growth mindset, which underscores the belief that abilities can be cultivated through effort and perseverance, encourages resilience and a readiness to confront challenges (Dweck, 2006). This mindset not only enhances academic achievement but also nurtures a lifelong passion for learning and a commitment to personal development (Dweck, 2006).

2.2 Domestic Violence and Academic Performance

Studies have consistently demonstrated that children exposed to domestic violence experience considerable difficulties in their academic pursuits. Kellogg and Barth (2000) argue that exposure to violence creates psychological barriers to learning, as traumatized students struggle with concentration, memory retention, and engagement in classroom activities. The researchers contend that domestic violence operates as a chronic stressor that impairs cognitive development and executive functioning in children. This finding aligns with trauma-informed perspectives in education, which suggest that violence exposure activates the fight-flight-freeze response system, leaving limited cognitive resources for academic engagement. (Kellogg & Barth, 2000)

Evans and Davies (2000) further elucidate that the psychological distress resulting from witnessing or experiencing violence manifests as behavioral problems, including poor attendance, disruptive conduct, and reduced motivation to succeed academically. The impact of domestic violence on academic performance is not uniform across all children. Research indicates that gender differences exist in how boys and girls respond to violence exposure. According to Edleson (1999), boys exposed to domestic violence are more likely to exhibit externalizing behaviors such as aggression and delinquency, which directly interferes with academic engagement. (Evans & Davies, 2000)

In contrast, girls tend to develop internalizing behaviors including anxiety, depression, and withdrawal from social activities, which indirectly undermines academic performance through reduced participation and confidence. Age differences also emerge in vulnerability patterns, with younger adolescents (ages 10-13) demonstrating heightened susceptibility to academic difficulties following violence exposure compared to older teenagers. This developmental variation suggests that intervention strategies must be age-appropriate and tailored to specific vulnerabilities (Edleson, 1999).

The frequency and patterns of domestic violence occurrence significantly influence the severity of academic consequences. Holt et al. (2008) demonstrate that children experiencing chronic, ongoing violence exposure show more pronounced academic deficits than those experiencing sporadic incidents. The researchers emphasize that the predictability and severity of violence determine stress responses and academic outcomes. Repetitive exposure creates a persistent state of hypervigilance and fear, preventing students from developing the psychological safety necessary for effective learning. (Holt et al., 2008).

Furthermore, research from Sub-Saharan African contexts reveals that domestic violence intersects with poverty, limited school resources, and weak institutional support systems, exacerbating academic challenges for affected students. Building trust and accountability in policing has emerged as a crucial protective factor in addressing violence in communities. Braga et al. (2019) note that when police-community partnerships function effectively, they create safer neighborhoods that buffer against violence exposure. While their focus extends beyond schools, the principle applies to educational settings where school-police partnerships strengthen reporting mechanisms and victim support services. (Braga et al., 2019).

Community engagement and dialogue-based approaches also contribute to creating protective environments. Putnam (2000) argues that communities characterized by strong social cohesion and trust networks are better positioned to identify and support children experiencing domestic violence, potentially mitigating academic consequences. Schools and communities in Bawjiase would benefit from similar collaborative approaches that enhance accountability and foster trust among stakeholders. Contemporary understanding increasingly recognizes the multifaceted nature of violence's impact on academic performance (Putnam, 2000).

Beyond direct cognitive effects, research acknowledges that children experiencing domestic violence often face challenges in social relationships, emotional regulation, and self-esteem, all of which contribute to academic difficulties. Baker-Henningham and López Bóo (2010) demonstrate through longitudinal research in Latin America that early intervention programs addressing both academic and trauma-informed support can mitigate negative outcomes. Their findings suggest that teachers trained in trauma-informed pedagogy and equipped with knowledge about domestic violence can create

classroom environments that facilitate healing and academic engagement. (Baker-Henningham & López Bóo, 2010).

This perspective emphasizes that domestic violence's impact on academic performance is not inevitable but can be reduced through deliberate, comprehensive interventions involving educators, mental health professionals, and community stakeholders. In the Ghanaian context, such integrative approaches remain largely underdeveloped, creating urgency for research examining local manifestations and solutions. In conclusion, substantial evidence establishes that domestic violence significantly impairs academic performance through mechanisms involving trauma responses, cognitive disruption, emotional dysregulation, and behavioral challenges (Baker-Henningham & López Bóo, 2010).

Gender and age-related variations in vulnerability patterns necessitate differentiated approaches to support. While substantial research exists in developed contexts, the Ghanaian context, particularly in communities like Bawjiase, requires localized investigation to understand how cultural, socioeconomic, and institutional factors shape these relationships. This study aims to contribute to that evidence base by examining the implications of domestic violence on academic performance in selected junior high schools in Bawjiase, thereby informing policies and interventions that address this critical issue.

2.3 Theoretical Review

The study draws its strength from two fundamental theories; Social Learning Theory (SLT) and Resilience theory which are central for understanding the issues of domestic violence.

2.3.1 Resilience theory

Understanding how students cope with experiences of domestic violence can benefit significantly from resilience theory, which contrasts with traditional approaches focusing solely on the negative impacts of such violence (Van Breda, 2018). Resilience theory adopts a strengths-based perspective, emphasising the identification and utilisation of positive factors to assist students in adapting and overcoming these challenges. Resilience is not a fixed personality trait but a dynamic process of adjusting to adversity (Moore, 2019). This dynamic nature underscores the importance of acknowledging that students' coping mechanisms can evolve and improve over time, shaped by their experiences and support systems. Additionally, resilience can be nurtured through available resources within a student's environment, rather than depending solely on exceptional personal qualities (Van Breda, 2018). These resources, such as supportive family members, teachers, friends, or community programs, play a crucial role in empowering students to develop resilience and effectively manage the complexities associated with domestic violence, thereby enhancing their overall well-being and academic success.

Resilience is not a static trait but varies depending on the circumstances. For example, a student might demonstrate strong coping skills in managing the emotional aftermath of domestic violence but struggle academically due to disrupted routines and instability

(Van Breda, 2018). This variability highlights the need for tailored support that addresses the specific challenges students face in various aspects of their lives.

Resilience theory, together with resiliency theory, explains the dynamic processes through which individuals adapt to adversity, emphasizing the personal attributes and protective factors that enable effective coping and positive adjustment (Van Breda, 2018). By exploring these strengths and protective factors, social workers and educators can gain deeper insights into how to assist students dealing with domestic violence. Recognizing and nurturing these factors can enhance efforts to build resilience, empowering students to overcome adversity and thrive despite difficult circumstances.

In the realm of social work practice, resilience theory provides a valuable framework for professionals supporting students experiencing domestic violence. It offers insights into the factors and processes that foster resilience and also guides research and intervention strategies aimed at promoting positive outcomes for these students (Van Breda, 2018). By emphasising strengths and fostering a supportive environment, practitioners can facilitate the development of resilience the essential capacity that enables individuals to navigate challenges and achieve well-being. This approach aligns closely with social work's mission to advocate for social justice and empower individuals to lead fulfilling lives.

In conclusion, resilience theory provides a robust framework for understanding how students navigate experiences of domestic violence. By shifting the focus from weaknesses to strengths, it underscores the importance of cultivating supportive environments and leveraging available resources to enhance resilience. Understanding the dynamic nature of resilience and the critical role of protective factors equips social

workers and educators with effective strategies to empower students, helping them overcome challenges and build a promising future full of opportunities.

2.3 Empirical Review

The review delves into two main aspects: the correlation between domestic violence and academic achievement, and students' strategies for handling such situations. Domestic violence significantly affects individuals, families, and communities, particularly in terms of students' educational performance. Grasping this impact is essential for devising effective interventions. Moreover, examining students' responses to domestic violence can offer insights into their resilience and guide support initiatives.

2.3.1 Relationship between domestic violence and academic performance

The impact of domestic violence on children's well-being and academic success is profound and far-reaching globally. Numerous studies highlight the detrimental effects of exposure to or experiencing domestic violence on students' academic performance (Njoroge et al., 2023). For example, Njoroge et al. (2023) conducted a study in Kenyan public primary schools with the aim of investigating how exposure to domestic violence influences students' academic achievement. Employing a descriptive research design, the researchers sampled 13 schools and 380 students in Nairobi County, Kenya, gathering data through questionnaires and assessment records. Their findings revealed a statistically significant but weak negative correlation between exposure to domestic violence and academic performance, indicating that students with higher levels of exposure tended to exhibit lower academic achievement. The study concluded that domestic violence disrupts students' academic success, underscoring the necessity of preventive measures such as parental sensitization programs to foster a supportive learning environment.

Likewise, Okite (2021) undertook a study in primary schools within Laroo Division, Uganda, to investigate the impact of domestic violence on students' academic success. Utilising a cross-sectional research design incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches, the study surveyed three schools and interviewed 42 participants, collecting data via questionnaires and interviews. Results indicated a decline in students' ability to concentrate, heightened isolation, increased instances of depression, and occurrences of violence among those exposed to domestic violence. Consequently, these factors contributed to reduced class participation and academic performance. The study proposed government intervention aimed at addressing alcoholism and domestic violence to improve academic outcomes.

Moreover, Tsegba (2021) carried out research in Benue State, Nigeria, with a focus on examining the impact of child abuse, encompassing domestic violence, on the academic achievement of primary school pupils. Employing a survey methodology with simple random sampling, the study administered questionnaires to gather data, which was subsequently analysed using percentages and t-tests. Results revealed a notable adverse influence of child abuse on students' performance in assessments and their engagement in classroom activities, ultimately impeding their academic progress. The study's recommendations encompassed addressing child abuse within educational policies and implementing strategies such as public awareness initiatives and professional development opportunities for educators.

Expanding on these discoveries, Mwale and Siwila (2020) undertook an investigation in Katete District, Zambia, to explore the impact of domestic violence on the academic performance of primary school students. Acknowledging the significant adverse effects of domestic violence on children's overall growth and academic accomplishments, the

research underscored the urgent necessity for comprehensive strategies to tackle domestic violence across various sectors, particularly in education. It emphasised the crucial importance of fostering secure and supportive learning environments that promote students' well-being and academic achievements, taking into account the harmful repercussions of domestic violence on their educational outcomes. Additionally, the study underscored the role of the education system in addressing domestic violence by implementing appropriate interventions and support mechanisms to mitigate its effects on students' learning experiences.

In a similar vein, Abdullahi (2020) delved into the effects of domestic violence on the academic performance of school children in Chanchaga, Nigeria. Employing straightforward statistical techniques, he examined data obtained from surveys and literature reviews, with a particular focus on the decline in commitment observed among parents, caregivers, and educators in the aftermath of domestic violence incidents. Abdullahi's investigation uncovered the significant impact of domestic violence not only on its direct victims but also on those entrusted with their care and education, underscoring the critical need for intervention. Consequently, the study advocated for the establishment of counselling centres at both community and local government levels to offer support to both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. This proactive strategy aimed to address the root causes of domestic violence while simultaneously providing essential assistance to those affected, thereby fostering a safer and more supportive environment conducive to the academic and emotional growth of schoolchildren.

The link between domestic violence and academic performance is undeniably significant and widespread, with research consistently indicating its harmful effects on students' educational achievements. Studies conducted by various researchers have revealed a troubling trend, showing that exposure to domestic violence is linked to lower academic success, decreased focus, increased isolation, and elevated levels of depression and violence among students. These findings highlight the urgent need for comprehensive interventions to address domestic violence within educational settings and beyond.

2.3.2 Coping strategies used by students to deal with domestic violence experiences

Domestic violence is a multifaceted issue with enduring repercussions for its victims, particularly women and children. McPherson (2002) conducted a thorough investigation into the connection between coping strategies and the overall well-being of women residing in domestic violence shelters. Through meticulous analysis, the study underscores the critical importance of understanding effective coping mechanisms, as they play a central role in shaping intervention initiatives within these shelters. By emphasising the need for qualitative analysis, McPherson sheds light on how different coping strategies impact a woman's well-being in the shelter environment. This research underscores the significance of tailored support systems and interventions that recognize and address the diverse needs of women navigating domestic violence shelters, ultimately contributing to their empowerment and resilience.

In a similar vein, Damra and Abujilban (2023) delved into the complex dynamics of coping strategies utilised by women navigating intimate partner violence (IPV) in Jordan. Their study goes beyond surface-level examination, aiming to uncover the intricate interplay between various types of IPV, demographic factors, and the coping mechanisms adopted by survivors. Through analysis, the research revealed a significant correlation between factors such as psychological aggression, physical violence, and the presence of children with the coping strategies women employ—whether they lean towards problem-focused, emotion-focused, or avoidance-oriented approaches. This correlation underscores the multifaceted nature of coping amidst IPV and highlights the necessity of tailored interventions that consider the unique circumstances and needs of survivors. Moreover, Damra and Abujilban emphasised the vital role of supportive social services in providing essential assistance to women grappling with the challenges of IPV, advocating for comprehensive support systems that empower survivors and facilitate their journey towards healing and resilience.

Winfield et al. (2023) presented a groundbreaking study focusing on children exposed to domestic violence, an aspect often overlooked but inherently vulnerable in abusive environments. Understanding the challenges faced by mothers striving to protect their children amidst turmoil, the research explores collaborative safety strategies adopted by both mothers and children to navigate severe domestic violence. Through in-depth thematic analysis of interviews, the study uncovers a range of coping mechanisms employed, including ongoing communication between mother and child, strategies to placate the abuser, and efforts to minimise exposure to violence. These findings underscore the resilience and agency of both mothers and children in adversity, highlighting their resourcefulness in navigating perilous circumstances. Importantly, the authors stress the need for safety planning interventions that consider the intricate

mother-child dynamic, acknowledging children's coping mechanisms and their innate drive to protect themselves and their mothers. This study advocates for holistic, trauma-informed approaches to intervention and support services, aiming to empower both mothers and children as they navigate the challenges of domestic violence.

Yusof et al. (2022) delved into the challenges faced by domestic violence survivors in Malaysia following their decision to separate from abusive partners. Through qualitative analysis, the study explores coping strategies employed by resilient women navigating social and emotional pressures post-separation. The research revealed a diverse array of coping mechanisms, from seeking formal support to drawing strength from religious practices and cultivating positive thinking amid adversity. These strategies serve as vital lifelines, offering solace and resilience in the face of overwhelming stress. Emphasising the crucial role of social workers, the study underscores their importance in empowering survivors by raising awareness of their rights and facilitating access to support systems. By equipping survivors with the knowledge and resources necessary for rebuilding their lives, social workers play a pivotal role in fostering empowerment and driving positive change within communities affected by domestic violence. This research not only sheds light on survivors' challenges but also advocates for comprehensive support systems prioritising survivor autonomy and well-being.

It should be stated that these studies provide valuable insights into domestic violence and coping strategies for adult victims across various contexts: women residing in shelters (McPherson, 2002), those experiencing intimate partner violence (Damra & Abujilban, 2023), mothers and children exposed to domestic violence (Winfield et al., 2023), and women who have separated from abusive partners (Yusof et al., 2022).

However, a noticeable gap exists regarding the application of these findings to students facing domestic violence. While the research sheds light on general coping strategies and support systems for victims, it fails to address the specific experiences and needs of students within educational settings. To fill this gap, this current study focuses on student-specific coping mechanisms, examining the unique challenges they encounter within academia, and investigates how exposure to domestic violence impacts students' academic performance. This approach offers crucial insights for developing tailored interventions and support systems to assist student victims of domestic violence.

2.3.3 Coping strategies adopted by students under threat of domestic violence

Defining Coping in the Context of Domestic Violence

Coping encompasses cognitive and behavioral efforts that individuals use to manage stressful circumstances and emotional distress. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define coping as constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external or internal demands appraised as taxing personal resources. In the context of domestic violence, students employ diverse coping strategies ranging from problem-focused approaches to emotion-focused and avoidance-based strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Problem-focused coping involves direct attempts to alter or manage the threat, such as seeking help from teachers, counselors, or trusted adults. Emotion-focused coping aims to regulate negative emotional responses through activities like journaling, prayer, or talking with peers. Avoidance coping includes strategies such as skipping school, substance use, or engaging in risky behaviors to escape from the reality of violence. (Compas et al., 2001) Empirical evidence demonstrates that the effectiveness of coping

strategies varies significantly based on the severity of violence exposure, the student's developmental stage, and available social support networks.

Adaptive Coping Strategies

Seeking social support emerges as one of the most effective adaptive coping strategies among students exposed to domestic violence. Davies and Cummings (1994) found that adolescents who confide in trusted adults about violence exposure experience reduced anxiety and improved academic engagement. Students who establish supportive relationships with teachers, school counselors, relatives, or peers demonstrate better emotional regulation and school attendance. (Davies & Cummings, 1994)

Religious coping and spiritual practices represent significant adaptive strategies in many cultural contexts. Graham-Bermann and Seng (2005) documented that adolescents from faith-based communities utilize prayer, religious community involvement, and spiritual beliefs as sources of resilience and hope. These students report enhanced sense of purpose and reduced suicidal ideation compared to peers without religious coping mechanisms. (Graham-Bermann & Seng, 2005) Cognitive restructuring, wherein students reframe violent situations as temporary and beyond their control, also demonstrates positive outcomes in maintaining self-esteem and academic motivation.

Academic engagement itself functions as an adaptive coping strategy for some students. Buckley (2000) found that adolescents who channel emotional distress into academic work demonstrate improved school performance and psychological adjustment. These students utilize schoolwork as a means of emotional expression and as a refuge from home violence. Girls particularly employ this strategy more frequently than boys,

potentially explaining better academic outcomes among girls exposed to domestic violence. (Buckley, 2000)

Assertion and help-seeking represent direct problem-focused coping strategies. Howell and Graham-Bermann (2012) documented that students who assertively communicate their distress to adults experience better outcomes in accessing support services and protective interventions. Adolescents who actively seek help from school-based resources, such as counseling services and teachers, report significantly lower depression and anxiety symptoms. (Howell & Graham-Bermann, 2012) However, empirical evidence indicates that help-seeking is contingent upon availability of trustworthy adults and institutional support mechanisms.

Maladaptive Coping Strategies

Avoidance coping, including school absenteeism, social withdrawal, and escapism, represents a prevalent maladaptive response among students under threat of domestic violence. Enriquez (2015) found in a longitudinal study that students employing avoidance strategies experience escalating academic failure and increased psychiatric symptoms. School avoidance serves as an escape mechanism but paradoxically exacerbates academic difficulties and social isolation. (Enriquez, 2015)

Substance use and behavioral delinquency emerge as particularly harmful coping mechanisms among adolescents exposed to domestic violence. Schwandt et al. (2013) demonstrated that students using alcohol and drugs to cope with violence exhibit poor academic outcomes, increased disciplinary problems, and heightened risk of continuing the cycle of violence. Substance use provides temporary emotional relief but undermines academic engagement and interpersonal relationships. (Schwandt et al.,

2013) Aggressive and externalizing behaviors, observed more frequently in boys, similarly represent unsuccessful attempts to manage violence exposure.

Emotional suppression and internalization of distress constitute subtle maladaptive coping strategies, particularly prevalent among girls. Jouriles et al. (2009) documented that adolescent girls who suppress emotions related to violence exposure develop heightened vulnerability to depression, anxiety disorders, and somatic complaints. While emotional suppression may facilitate temporary classroom functioning, it prevents psychological processing of trauma and perpetuates long-term mental health difficulties (Jouriles et al., 2009).

Gender Differences in Coping Strategies

Empirical research reveals substantial gender differences in coping strategy selection and effectiveness among students exposed to domestic violence. Boys disproportionately employ externalizing and aggressive coping approaches, while girls more frequently utilize emotion-focused and internalizing strategies. Cummings et al. (2006) reported that boys exposed to violence demonstrate increased aggressive behavior and delinquency as primary coping mechanisms, resulting in school disciplinary actions and academic underperformance (Cummings et al., 2006).

Girls, conversely, employ help-seeking, social support, and academic engagement more extensively. Sternberg et al. (2006) found that adolescent girls exposed to domestic violence more frequently confide in teachers and peers and maintain engagement in academic activities as coping mechanisms. However, girls also demonstrate higher rates of internalizing strategies and emotional suppression, which paradoxically increase vulnerability to depressive and anxiety disorders. (Sternberg et al., 2006) This

gender pattern suggests that while girls' coping strategies facilitate better academic outcomes, they may compromise long-term mental health and psychological resilience.

Developmental and Age-Related Variations

Coping strategy development and effectiveness vary significantly across developmental stages. Younger adolescents (ages 10-13) demonstrate limited cognitive capacity for sophisticated coping strategies and rely predominantly on external support and adult guidance. Dubow et al. (2001) demonstrated that younger students exposed to violence utilize more concrete, emotion-focused coping and depend heavily on parental and teacher support. (Dubow et al., 2001).

Older adolescents (ages 14-18) develop more complex, problem-focused coping strategies including cognitive restructuring, assertiveness, and help-seeking behaviors. Seery et al. (2008) found that older adolescents possess greater cognitive flexibility enabling them to employ multiple coping strategies adaptively. However, older adolescents also demonstrate increased vulnerability to substance use and risk-taking as maladaptive coping mechanisms. (Seery et al., 2008) The developmental transition to adolescence increases autonomy but also heightens risks of independent maladaptive coping choices.

Cultural Context and Coping Effectiveness

Coping effectiveness is substantially influenced by cultural values, family dynamics, and community support systems. Research in Sub-Saharan African contexts reveals that collectivist cultural values shape coping strategy preferences distinctly from individualist Western contexts. Osofsky (2003) notes that adolescents in collectivist societies derive coping strength from extended family networks, community solidarity, and cultural identity affirmation (Osofsky, 2003).

In African contexts, religious and spiritual coping mechanisms carry particular significance as culturally sanctioned responses to adversity. Heise and Garcia-Moreno (2002) document that in Ghana and other Sub-Saharan African nations, community-based support systems, including neighborhood watch groups and traditional authority involvement, provide protective coping frameworks for at-risk adolescents. (Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002) Conversely, limited institutional support and weak school-based counseling services in many African contexts constrain availability of professional help-seeking as a viable coping strategy.

Resilience Factors Supporting Adaptive Coping

Empirical evidence identifies specific resilience factors that facilitate adaptive coping among students exposed to domestic violence. Afifi and Schrodt (2003) determined that access to supportive adults, secure peer relationships, academic efficacy, and community resources significantly predict adaptive coping outcomes. Students who perceive adults as accessible and trustworthy demonstrate enhanced help-seeking behavior and reduced reliance on avoidance strategies. (Afifi & Schrodt, 2003)

Self-efficacy and emotional regulation capacity emerge as critical internal resilience factors. Jager et al. (2011) documented that adolescents possessing strong beliefs in their ability to manage stress employ more problem-focused and emotion-focused coping effectively. Emotional regulation skills enable students to process traumatic experiences without resorting to maladaptive avoidance or substance use. (Jager et al., 2011) Social connectedness at school, including positive teacher-student relationships and peer acceptance, substantially enhances coping effectiveness and academic engagement among violence-exposed students.

Implications for Intervention and Support

Contemporary empirical evidence supports comprehensive, multi-level interventions addressing coping strategy development in students exposed to domestic violence. School-based interventions incorporating trauma-informed counseling, peer support groups, and coping skills training demonstrate effectiveness in promoting adaptive strategies. Jouriles et al. (2012) report that cognitive-behavioral intervention programs significantly improve coping efficacy and reduce maladaptive behaviors among at-risk adolescents. (Jouriles et al., 2012)

Teacher training in recognizing and supporting students employing maladaptive coping represents a critical intervention point. Graham-Bermann and Hughes (2003) found that teachers trained in trauma sensitivity and coping support more readily identify students in distress and facilitate connections to supportive resources. (Graham-Bermann & Hughes, 2003) Family-level interventions addressing parental stress and violence reduction simultaneously reduce the necessity for intense coping efforts among adolescents. In the Ghanaian context, culturally adapted interventions integrating community leaders, religious institutions, and school systems would optimize coping support availability and acceptability.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework examined how domestic violence influences academic performance in selected Junior High Schools in Bawjiase, taking into account intervening factors such as school attendance and emotional stability. It explored the mechanisms through which domestic violence impacts students' performance within this particular educational environment. By acknowledging the relationship among these variables, the framework provides valuable understanding of the obstacles posed

by domestic violence to students' educational advancement in Bawjiase. This understanding can inform tailored interventions aimed at assisting students dealing with domestic violence experiences. Figure 2.1 depicts the conceptual framework employed in the study.

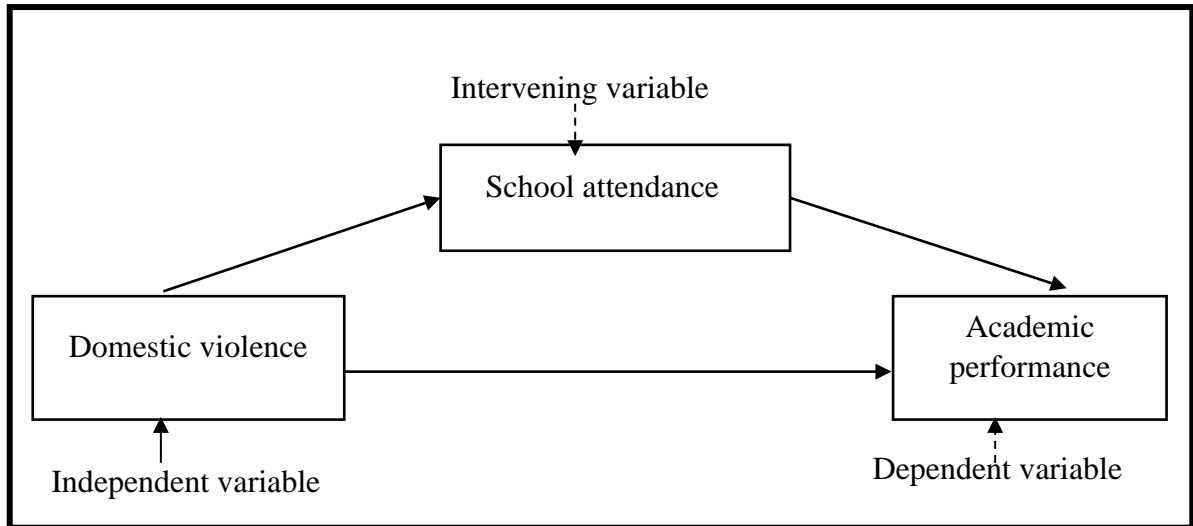


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework on domestic violence and academic performance

Source: Author's construct (2024)

2.4.1 Hypothesis development

Relationship 1: Effect of domestic violence on academic performance

Existing research suggests a significant negative link between exposure to domestic violence and the academic performance of Junior High School students. Studies consistently show that students who experience domestic violence tend to achieve lower academic outcomes compared to their peers unaffected by such situations (Njoroge et al., 2023; Okite, 2021; Tsegba, 2021; Mwale & Siwila, 2020; Abdullahi, 2020). Factors like reduced concentration, increased isolation, heightened instances of depression, and encounters with violence contribute to their decreased participation in classroom activities and subsequent academic achievement (Okite, 2021). This indicates that domestic violence acts as a disruptive factor that impedes students' educational progress

(Njoroge et al., 2023; Tsegba, 2021). Therefore, it can be inferred that increased exposure to domestic violence correlates with poorer academic performance among Junior High school students. However, further empirical research is needed to confirm this hypothesis and explore potential underlying mechanisms.

Relationship 2: Role of school attendance in the relationship between domestic violence and academic performance

Domestic violence and academic performance are interlinked in a very intricate relationship that is influenced to a large extent by school attendance. Domestic violence tends to disorganize the student's attendance in school, thus making them absent from school more frequently (Herrenkohl et al., 2018). Days are lost at school as a result of the disturbance at home due to the violence, and this may lower the academic performance of a child. According to Finkelhor et al. (2018), this can widen the achievement gap between children who come from a violent home compared to others.

There seems to be a strong correlation between poor school attendance and poor performance since absent students tend to fall behind at school. Indeed, a preponderance of studies has consistently recorded low grades and standardised test scores among children who experience domestic violence (Kim et al., 2020). Therefore, school attendance can be considered an important mediator of the relation between domestic violence and academic performance. It requires further empirical investigation to get clear evidence on what it is based on and how far it explains a difficulty

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter acted as a roadmap detailing the approach to conducting the research study. It explained the methods, procedures, and techniques used in addressing the research questions. The chapter presented the research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection technique, data analysis technique, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Philosophy

By embracing a pragmatic research philosophy, the researcher took on a flexible stance, employing a range of methods and perspectives to deeply grasp the research subject. Recognizing how various factors such as community, personal background, and school environment influence academic performance, the research focused on collecting solid evidence through surveys and interviews to understand the impact of domestic violence on students. Drawing on the insights of students, teachers, and counsellors, the aim was to not just understand the issue but to devise practical solutions for supporting students facing domestic violence. This methodology facilitated a comprehensive examination and the crafting of tangible, real-world remedies (Smith, 2017). The decision to embrace pragmatism provided a rationale for the flexible approach, which encompassed diverse methods and viewpoints to ensure a thorough understanding of the research topic.

Recognizing the multifaceted nature of factors affecting academic performance, the utilisation of various methodologies was deemed essential to capture the full complexity of the phenomenon. Pragmatism underscored the significance of obtaining

empirical evidence, such as through surveys and interviews with students impacted by domestic violence, to underpin research conclusions. This solid empirical groundwork provided a strong foundation for investigating how domestic violence affects students' academic performance, providing valuable insights into their real-life experiences.

3.2 Research Approach

The study employed a mixed methods research approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques to examine the implications of domestic violence on the academic performance of students in selected Junior High Schools in Bawjiase. The mixed methods approach was considered appropriate because it enabled the study to obtain measurable evidence on the prevalence and academic effects of domestic violence, while also capturing participants' personal experiences and interpretations of the phenomenon. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), mixed methods research provides a more comprehensive understanding of complex social issues by integrating numerical data with in-depth qualitative insights. Given that domestic violence affects students both academically and psychosocially, relying on a single approach would have limited the depth and breadth of findings.

The quantitative component of the study was used to gather structured data from students through questionnaires to assess the extent of exposure to domestic violence and its perceived influence on academic performance. This approach allowed for the identification of patterns and relationships among variables, consistent with the view of Bryman (2016) that quantitative methods are suitable for explaining trends and making generalisations from a sample population. On the other hand, the qualitative component involved interviews with teachers and guidance counsellors to explore their observations and interpretations of how domestic violence affected students' behaviour,

participation and school achievement. This provided contextual explanations that enriched the statistical findings. As noted by Creswell (2014), qualitative methods are valuable for exploring participants' lived experiences and giving meaning to quantitative results. The integration of both approaches therefore strengthened the validity of the study by allowing triangulation of data sources and methods. This ensured that the findings were not only statistically supported but also grounded in real school experiences within the Bawjiase context. Overall, the mixed methods approach was justified because it offered a holistic and empirically robust means of understanding the implications of domestic violence on students' academic performance.

3.3 Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach grounded in an explanatory research design to investigate the implications of domestic violence on the academic performance of students in selected Junior High Schools in Bawjiase. The explanatory design was considered appropriate because it enabled the study to examine not only the occurrence of domestic violence but also how and why it influenced students' academic outcomes. As noted by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), explanatory designs in mixed methods research allow quantitative findings to be clarified and expanded through qualitative inquiry.

In the first phase, a quantitative descriptive survey design was employed to collect numerical data on the prevalence of domestic violence among students and its perceived effects on their academic performance. Structured questionnaires were administered to students to generate measurable data that established patterns and relationships among

key variables. This phase provided a broad statistical foundation for understanding the magnitude of the problem.

In the second phase, a qualitative explanatory component was conducted to deepen understanding of the quantitative results. In-depth interviews were held with teachers and guidance counsellors who worked closely with students. This phase sought to explain the quantitative findings by exploring participants' observations and interpretations of how domestic violence manifested in students' classroom behaviour, participation and academic engagement. Babbie (2013) explains that explanatory qualitative inquiry is useful for interpreting statistical results and uncovering underlying mechanisms behind observed relationships.

By integrating quantitative measurement with qualitative explanation, the study achieved a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between domestic violence and students' academic performance. The explanatory mixed-methods design therefore strengthened the credibility of the findings by ensuring that statistical trends were supported by contextual evidence

3.4 Population of the Study

This study targeted pupils who had experienced violence in three selected Junior High Schools in the study area. These schools are Bawjiase Methodist School, Okwabina SDA Basic School, and Fianko D/A JHS. The three schools were selected because they serve the same geographic context. Again, the researcher found it much easier collecting data from these schools because of their closeness to each other and the fact that the schools were willing to cooperate with the study. Including students from these JHS schools was crucial for investigating the effect of domestic violence on academic performance in Bawjiase Junior High schools. These schools play integral roles in the

local Junior High School education system, providing a foundation for a thorough examination of the educational environment within the community, particularly at the Junior High School level.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Technique

The study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, to recruit participants who possessed specific characteristics, experiences and expertise directly relevant to the research phenomenon. Purposive sampling, alternatively referred to as judgment sampling or criterion-based selection, is a methodologically rigorous approach in which the researcher deliberately selects participants based on predetermined criteria that align with the research objectives (Etikan et al., 2016; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Palinkas et al. (2015) contended that purposive sampling is particularly valuable in qualitative and mixed methods research where the objective is to develop deep understanding of complex social phenomena through engagement with information-rich participants who possess direct knowledge or experience of the phenomenon under investigation. This sampling approach was considered appropriate for the study because it enabled the researcher to strategically identify and recruit students who had experienced or witnessed domestic violence, thereby ensuring that data collection focused on participants whose lived experiences directly illuminated the research questions regarding the implications of domestic violence on academic performance.

The deliberate selection of purposively sampled participants was justified by several methodological considerations. First, purposive sampling enabled the researcher to maximize the relevance and richness of data collected by focusing exclusively on participants with direct experiential knowledge of domestic violence and its effects on

educational engagement. Bernard (2006) argued that purposive sampling is particularly appropriate when the research population is relatively hidden or sensitive, as domestic violence-affected populations often are, because it enables researchers to access hard-to-reach participants through referral networks and trusted intermediaries. The recruitment of students who had directly experienced or witnessed domestic violence ensured that interview and focus group data would comprise authentic accounts of the phenomenon rather than theoretical speculation or secondhand information. Second, purposive sampling enhanced the validity of findings by reducing the risk of including participants with insufficient knowledge of the phenomenon. By limiting participation to students aged 12-17 years who had documented exposure to domestic violence, the study ensured internal validity through homogeneity of the sample regarding the key independent variable of interest. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) emphasized that purposive sampling in qualitative research strengthens internal validity by ensuring that selected participants can provide detailed, nuanced information directly addressing the research questions.

The overall sample comprised 39 students recruited from three purposively selected junior high schools in Bawjiase, alongside eight educators (five teachers and three school counsellors). The student participants were aged 12-17 years, representing the typical developmental and educational stage of junior high school students in Ghana. Each participating school had an estimated student population of approximately 85 students, and school-based gatekeepers including teachers and school counsellors who possessed intimate knowledge of their students' family circumstances and academic performance identified eligible participants based on their first-hand professional experience and direct engagement with students. This gatekeeper-assisted purposive sampling approach was methodologically justified because it leveraged the institutional

position and professional expertise of school personnel to identify and access students who met inclusion criteria whilst simultaneously ensuring ethical protocols regarding informed consent and vulnerable population protection.

The inclusion of educator participants, specifically teachers and school counsellors, was strategically important for the study's methodological rigor and comprehensiveness. School counsellors were included because they occupied a uniquely privileged professional position with responsibility for providing pastoral care, emotional support and psychosocial intervention to students experiencing trauma and distress, including that resulting from domestic violence. Counsellors' direct engagement with affected students enabled them to observe the manifestation of domestic violence effects on students' emotional regulation, academic engagement, attendance patterns and overall school adjustment. Their professional expertise in trauma-informed practice and student wellbeing provided essential contextual information regarding the psychological and behavioural mechanisms through which domestic violence compromised academic performance. Furthermore, counsellors' responsibility for maintaining confidential, supportive relationships with vulnerable students positioned them as crucial gatekeepers who could facilitate ethical recruitment of sensitive research participants whilst ensuring that participation did not jeopardize students' ongoing access to psychosocial support services.

Teachers were intentionally included in the study based on several methodologically defensible criteria. First, only teachers with more than five years of professional experience were recruited, ensuring that participants possessed substantial professional experience and developmental knowledge regarding typical student behaviour, academic engagement patterns, and indicators of distress. Expertise and tenure in the

teaching profession enhanced the validity of teacher observations regarding deviations from normative academic performance and indicators of family-based trauma. Second, recruitment was restricted to teachers who had instructed the participating student sample and had developed substantive relationships with these students, ensuring that teacher observations derived from direct knowledge of students' academic performance trajectories, classroom engagement, attendance patterns and behavioural indicators. This criterion-based selection minimized the risk of including teachers with only tangential knowledge of participating students, thereby enhancing the validity and depth of teacher-provided information. Third, only teachers who had established effective, trusting communication with students were recruited, recognizing that such relational foundations facilitated more candid and accurate accounts of students' academic and behavioural challenges. Sharpley (1997) argued that rapport and trust between research participants and data collectors significantly influence the quality and authenticity of qualitative data, with strong relationships enabling participants to disclose sensitive information more openly.

The final educator sample consisted of five teachers and three school counsellors, representing a total of eight educator participants who provided complementary professional perspectives on the implications of domestic violence for students' academic performance and wellbeing. The inclusion of multiple educator perspectives both teaching and counselling strengthened the methodological credibility of findings by enabling triangulation across professional roles and experiences. Teachers provided perspectives grounded in classroom observation and academic assessment, whilst counsellors provided perspectives informed by direct therapeutic engagement and deeper knowledge of students' family circumstances and emotional states. This purposive inclusion of diverse educator perspectives enabled more comprehensive

understanding of how domestic violence manifested across different contexts (classroom, home, counselling environment) and affected students through multiple mechanisms (academic engagement, emotional regulation, peer relationships). The educators' cumulative insights substantially informed the development of nuanced understandings regarding the mechanisms through which domestic violence compromised academic performance and identified evidence-based strategies for intervention and support that were grounded in educational and psychological expertise.

In summary, the employment of purposive sampling guided by clear inclusion criteria and implemented through trusted institutional gatekeepers represented a methodologically rigorous approach to participant selection that maximized the relevance, depth and authenticity of data whilst maintaining ethical safeguards appropriate for research involving vulnerable minors and sensitive topics. The deliberate recruitment of information-rich participants with direct experiential knowledge, combined with the inclusion of multiple educator perspectives, strengthened the overall validity and comprehensiveness of the study's findings regarding the implications of domestic violence for students' academic performance in the Bawjiase context.

3.6 Source of Data

In this study, a combination of primary and secondary sources was utilised. Primary data involved collecting firsthand information directly from students through a questionnaire. Conversely, secondary data encompassed students' terminal reports to establish the relationship between domestic and academic performance and the effect as well with the intervening variable; attendance.

3.7 Research Instrument

The study employ two research instruments were employed: a questionnaire and an interview guide. The questionnaire was administered in paper form to students in selected Junior High Schools in Bawjiase. It consisted of closed-ended items designed to collect data on the prevalence of domestic violence and the emotional stability of students, as well as how these factors related to their academic performance. The items required students to indicate whether they had witnessed or experienced domestic violence at home and to rate their levels of emotional stability in relation to school activities.

The questionnaire was carefully structured to align with the research objectives. It comprised a total of 23 items, of which 3 addressed demographic characteristics such as age, gender and grade level, while the remaining 20 items focused on issues relating to domestic violence, emotional stability and academic performance. The demographic questions required categorical responses, whereas the research-related items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. This structured format facilitated ease of administration, enhanced response consistency and supported effective quantitative analysis.

In addition to the questionnaire, an interview guide was used to collect qualitative data from teachers and guidance counsellors. The interviews provided deeper insights into participants' observations and interpretations of how domestic violence affected students' behaviour, emotional wellbeing and academic engagement. The combination of questionnaires and interviews therefore ensured a comprehensive collection of both numerical and explanatory data, strengthening the overall credibility of the study.

The researcher obtained the academic records of the affected students for a specified duration and examined any noticeable trends. More precisely, the researcher sought the average class performance records from 2023 to April 2024, while adhering to proper procedures. Prior to analysing the data, any identifiable details were removed to ensure anonymity. Additionally, consent was secured from school administrators. This approach highlights the significance of ethical guidelines in investigating the influence of domestic violence on academic achievement.

Drawing from this literature, an interview guide was crafted to complement the questionnaire in gathering comprehensive insights into the study's objectives. The guide was structured to delve deeper into participants' experiences and perceptions regarding domestic violence and its impact on academic performance. It featured semi-structured interviews with counsellors and teachers, aiming to explore their experiences with domestic violence and its specific implications for students' academic performance. These interviews utilised open-ended questions to encourage detailed narratives and personal reflections from educators regarding how domestic violence affects students socially, emotionally, and academically within the school environment. Careful consideration was given to the phrasing of questions to ensure clarity and encourage open dialogue, while probes were included to elicit further elaboration on specific topics.

3.7 Data Analysis Technique

This study adopted a mixed-analysis, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies for data analysis. Numerical data held primary importance, and statistical tools like SPSS and Excel (Brown & Miller, 2019) were instrumental in organising and analysing data related to instances of domestic violence and academic

performance metrics. Descriptive statistics, including measures like frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, were employed to understand the occurrence and distribution of variables within the student population. Furthermore, inferential statistics such as T-tests, ANOVA, correlation, and regression analysis were conducted. Typically, correlation analysis, a method suitable for discerning the direction and strength of the relationship between domestic violence and academic performance, was employed. This analytical approach provided insights into the dynamics between these variables and their mutual influences, considering the multifaceted nature of the study's focus (Garcia & Lee, 2020). Regression was used to examine the extent of effect of domestic violence on academic performance as well as the mediating role of school attendance in the relationship between domestic violence and academic performance of students.

In contrast, the qualitative analysis concentrated on textual data with the goal of uncovering underlying meanings and experiences. Thematic analysis emerged as the primary qualitative method, involving interviews with teachers and counsellors to gather data. Following data collection, transcripts of these interviews underwent coding to pinpoint recurring themes associated with the effect of domestic violence on academic performance. These identified themes were then meticulously analysed to ensure their coherence and relevance to the research question. Through the combination of these quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the research strived to obtain a holistic understanding of the interplay between domestic violence and academic performance.

This study tackled the issue of legitimation by utilising a mixed methods , incorporating surveys and interviews to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. This approach was designed to offer a thorough insight into the correlation between domestic violence and academic performance among students, thereby enhancing the study's credibility within the unique setting of Bawjiase Junior High School. The investigation was made possible by methodological diversity. Triangulating quantitative results with qualitative accounts strengthened the study's trustworthiness. Quantitative data combined with qualitative themes allowed for a more complex understanding of the mechanisms underlying this influence. In order to ensure that conclusions were firmly based on empirical evidence, rigorous peer review and methodological reflexivity were employed. These measures advanced understanding of the complex dynamics between domestic violence and educational outcomes. Transparent reporting of methodologies and challenges facilitated scrutiny and replication (Darkwah, 2013).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The researcher made sure to be ethical in this study maintaining transparency respecting rights and trust between participants. Following the ethical frameworks established by Roberts et al. (2022) and Thompson et al. (2018), consent was gained from key stakeholders teachers, counsellors and students who were made aware of confidentiality, anonymity, and their right to withdraw from the study without penalty. The research instruments (questionnaire and interview guide) used were evidence-based measures developed from validated tools for content validity after review by the research expert (supervisor) to ensure that they are culturally appropriate and sensitive. To improve the reliability of the study, data triangulation was employed by using qualitative (interviews and focus groups) and quantitative (academic performance

records) data. These multiple strategies made it possible for the research to address the links between domestic violence and students' educational academic performance.

The researcher considered their positionality as a teacher and ensured to take utmost care not to allow any bias or influence. The researcher took active steps to make sure her influence as a researcher did not interfere with the rest of the research process/output following ethical guidelines/rules and using good methodology in designing and conducting the research to keep it as legitimate as possible. To reduce the possible bias of being a teacher within which the research was embedded, internal inclusion variables were employed to ensure that students understood their role in the study and that participation was voluntary without effect on academic standing. To decrease bias, the researcher obtained external validation of the research instruments and applied data triangulation, using qualitative and quantitative methods. The researcher ensured that the participants knew that measures had been taken to keep the findings as objective and neutral as possible, so therefore there was no influence on them.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings from the surveys and interviews conducted to investigate the effect of domestic violence on students' academic performance in selected Junior High Schools in Bawjiase. In all, students who responded to the questionnaire were 39 out of 39, while eight educators (5 teachers and 3 counsellors) from the three schools took part in the interview. The findings were discussed in the light of the existing literature, and implications of the broader meaning are drawn concerning long-term effects expected in students' educational outcomes. This chapter is organised as follows: demographic characteristics of respondents, level of domestic violence experienced by students, coping strategies used by students to deal with domestic violence experiences, relationship between domestic violence and academic performance, qualitative data analysis and discussion of findings.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The sociodemographic variables form an important backdrop against which to frame the students' experiences of domestic violence. This section describes information on gender, age, and education level of the 39 students from selected Junior High Schools in Bawjiase, highlighting the heterogeneity of this sample. These elements are relevant in interpreting the findings to a greater understanding of specific challenges different groups face within the student population. Table 4.1 presents the demographic characteristics of students.

Table 4.1: Demographic characteristics of students

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	24	62%
Male	15	38%
Total	39	100%
Age		
12-13	18	46%
14-15	16	41%
16-17	5	13%
Total	39	100%
Education Level		
JHS 1	10	26%
JHS 2	17	44%
JHS 3	12	31%
Total	39	100%

Source: Field data (2025)

The background variables are described by the demographic data that provide very useful information on gender, age, and education. In relation to gender, the sample of 39 participants consisted of 24 females, 62%, and 15 males that make 38%. This implies that this study is biased toward female students whose contributions could dominate the discussion of domestic violence and ways of coping.

Regarding age, the majority of the respondents were in the age bracket of 12-13 years old with 18 students, or 46%, falling into this category. As it shows, almost half the number of the respondents are younger adolescents. The next largest group was made up of 16 participants, which is 41%, who were between 14 and 15 years old. After that, there were only 5 participants, or 13%, who were aged 16 to 17. In terms of age, it appears that the study has a majority of the participants at the younger half of their schooling years, possibly having different experiences and coping mechanisms from the older adolescents.

Based on the level of education of students, the findings suggest that 10 students representing 26%, were in JHS 1, 17 students, representing 44%, were in JHS 2, and 12 students, representing 31%, and were in JHS 3. This distribution depicts that the largest group of respondents falls within the JHS 2 category, and their experience and views about domestic violence may be different, in comparison with other grades, while students' progress through educational activities.

Generally, this demographic information provides context on the participants in this study, shedding light on an overwhelming female participation, a high concentration of younger adolescents, and a wide range in terms of education levels represented. The next table presents the demographic characteristics of educators.

Table 4.2: Demographic characteristics of Teachers and Counsellors

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
25-30	1	13%
31-35	2	25%
36-40	3	38%
41-45	2	25%
Gender		
Male	5	63%
Female	3	38%
Educational Level		
Degree	7	88%
Masters	1	13%
Experience Range		
5 to 10	3	38%
11 to 15	4	50%
16 to 20	1	13%

Source: Field data (2025)

The study conducted detailed interviews with eight educators (teachers and Counsellors) to understand the subject matter very well. Table 4.2 presents the demographic characteristics of educators thereof. The demographic analysis showed that a majority of the respondents are within the 36-40 age brackets (37.5%). This means that the sample population is mature, as most have significant professional experience. A majority of the respondents are male (62.5%), and this might also influence perspectives regarding the issue. A majority of the respondents hold no more than a bachelor's degree; only one is at the Master's level, which indicates a highly knowledgeable sample population. Moreover, five to fifteen years of professional experiences also mean that a substantial amount of practical knowledge on how domestic violence affects academic performance is available. The qualitative data analysis collected in-depth information from these professionals on changes in student performance, distress signals, and how efficiently present support mechanisms work.

4.3 Level of Domestic Violence Experienced by Students

The researcher assessed the level of domestic violence encountered by students attending selected Junior High Schools in Bawjiase. This was to identify the rate of occurrence and nature of domestic violence among these students and the frequency and types of the violence thereof. The following tables present the level of domestic violence experienced by students based on certain indicators.

Table 4.3: Witnessing physical violence at home

I have witnessed physical violence occurring in my home						
Category	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
JHS 1						
Female						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%	5.13%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	10.26%	10.26%
Male						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	7.69%	10.26%
JHS 2						
Female						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	12.82%	17.95%
14-15	2.56%	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%	5.13%	12.82%
Male						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	7.69%	10.26%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%
JHS 3						
Female						
12-13	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%	5.13%
16-17	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7.69%	7.69%
Male						
14-15	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%	5.13%	10.26%
16-17	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	0.00%	5.13%
Grand Total	5.13%	5.13%	0.00%	25.64%	64.10%	100.00%

Source: Field data (2025)

Table 4.3 presents the distribution of data based on witnessing physical violence at home. In the JHS 1 level, male students reported exposure to witnessing physical violence at home more than female students (10.26% vs 5.13%). There were a higher percentage of males aged 12-13 strongly agreeing to having experienced violence (7.69%), compared to females at that age with only 2.56% strongly agreeing to experiencing violence. Interestingly, no 14-15 male individuals reported witnessing violence, contrary to 10.26% of their female counterparts. This means that younger males are more aware of household violence at an earlier stage, and older females become more aware of such experiences.

A gender differential is perhaps most striking among JHS 2 students, with females generally reporting greater exposure to domestic violence than males. The most affected group at (strong agreement level) were found to be females in the class of age group of 12–13 years, with 12.82% strongly agreeing to witness violence. Conversely, only 7.69% of men in that age group agreed strongly. Moreover, concerning 14-15 years old students, males showed the lowest percentage (2.56%) compared to a higher percentage (5.13%) for females in the same age group; this indicates that females may be feeling or are willing to be aware of violence more than males at this point in time.

In JHS 3, the trend starts to reverse somewhat, and older males report greater exposure to violence in the home. 7.69% of 16–17-year-old females strongly agreed to experience physical violence, compared to 5.13% of males in the same age range. Meanwhile, 10.26% of males while only 5.13% of females 14–15 years reported agreeing with the combined agreement scores. This suggests that males are increasingly aware of or impacted by domestic violence as they age.

Generally, stronger agreement level towards witnessing of violence was shown by the highest percentage of students (64.10%). Furthermore, younger females and older males were dominant genders to describe their experiences with violence. The results imply that females tend to indicate higher exposure in earlier grades, while males seem to report such experiences more with time. These tendencies by gender could be indicative of how male and females perceive, experience, or report domestic violence at multiple education levels.

Table 4.4 Emotional or psychological violence

I have ever been a victim of emotional or psychological violence						
Category	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
JHS 1						
Female						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%	5.13%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	5.13%	10.26%
Male						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	7.69%	10.26%
JHS 2	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Female						
12-13	2.56%	5.13%	0.00%	5.13%	5.13%	17.95%
14-15	7.69%	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%	12.82%
Male						
12-13	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%	2.56%	2.56%	10.26%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%
JHS 3						
Female						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	5.13%
16-17	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	2.56%	7.69%
Male						
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	5.13%	10.26%
16-17	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%	5.13%
Grand Total	10.26%	7.69%	7.69%	30.77%	43.59%	100.00%

Source: Field data (2025)

Table 4.4 presents the issue of emotional or psychological violence. At the JHS 1 level, both males and females experience emotional violence but not equally. Males had a higher rate of strong agreement (7.69%) than females (2.56%), in the age category, 12-13. In contrast, among 14-15-year-olds, no males stated that they had been victims of the violence; only females stated being victims with a total of 10.26%. This indicates that young males are more conscious or influenced by emotional violence very early on in their lives, whereas females are more susceptible at a later age.

In JHS 2, reports of emotional violence rise sharply, particularly among the females. The highest percentage, 17.95%, was recorded among 12–13-year-old females who affirm being victimized, 5.13% of whom strongly agree with this point speaking about their own experience. The corresponding overall percentage for males of the same age (12–13) was much lower (10.26%), and their responses were more evenly distributed across levels of agreement. For students aged 14-15, echoing pattern is noted in which female students reported higher experiences of emotional violence (12.82%), while male students aged 14-15 had the lowest percentage (2.56%). These trends indicate that such emotional violence is more prevalent or is being recognized among female students while male students report less as they advance through school.

Emotional violence was also reported at the JHS 3 level, although responses differed by gender and age groups. For young males, experience was highest in the 16-17 age groups (7.69%), as opposed to the 14-15 cohorts, where experience was lower, but still presents (5.13%). On the other hand, males aged 14-15 years had a rather high percentage (10.26%) compared to older males (16-17 years) having a lesser percentage (5.13%). This could suggest that for younger males, emotional violence is identified early but decreases with age, but for females, experiences are more stable.

Emotional and psychological violence is a major problem as seen from the collective data on it where 43.59% of the students strongly agree and 30.77% agree to them being victims. The overwhelming majority of emotional violence reported is coming from females particularly in the JHS 2 category. On the other hand, younger males in JHS 1 exhibit a rising high rate of emotional violence, of which their reporting seems to be decreasing over time. Such differences with regard to age and gender show that emotional violence can be regarded as having a distinct form of experience or

perception depending on who you are and how old you are, as females report higher exposure rates with higher years of school attendance, whilst males appear to be more vulnerable during early school years.

Table 4.5: Witnessing fathers physically abusing mothers

I have ever witnessed my father physically abused my mother						
Category	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
JHS 1						
Female						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%	5.13%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	7.69%	10.26%
Male						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	7.69%	10.26%
JHS 2						
Female						
12-13	5.13%	5.13%	2.56%	0.00%	5.13%	17.95%
14-15	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%	5.13%	2.56%	12.82%
Male						
12-13	2.56%	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%	10.26%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%
JHS 3						
Female						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%
14-15	5.13%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%
16-17	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	7.69%
Male						
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	0.00%	5.13%	10.26%
16-17	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	5.13%
Grand Total	15.38%	10.26%	10.26%	17.95%	46.15%	100.00%

Source: Field data (2025)

Table 4.5 presents the distribution on witnessing fathers physically abusing mothers. Similar rates of exposure were seen with respect to domestic violence, as 10.26% of male JHS 1 aged 12-13 years old acknowledged exposure and 14-15 years old with regards to female. Of these age groups, males and females both strongly agreed to having witnessed physical abuse at 10.26%. The data indicates domestic violence lives among some younger students, with males and females encountering it in equal

numbers at this point. Only 14-15 years women develop just this small acknowledgment or awareness to this issue than men younger males.

A more clear-cut pattern emerges with JHS 2 students, where female students expressed a higher level of exposure to witnessing domestic violence. 12-13-year-old females had the highest percent of victims (17.95% reported experiences and 5.13% strongly agreeing). Among male participants in the same age range, the corresponding figure was just 10.26%. The 14-15 age groups showed a similar trend, with 12.82% of females reporting witnessing such abuse down from 12.82%, whereas only 2.56% of males reported witnessing such abuse. This suggests that females are potentially more sensitive to, or affected by, violence in the home when they enter adolescence, compared to males.

The data shows a more complex trend by JHS 3. For females, the highest percentage (7.69% with 5.13% who strongly agreed) of females aged 16-17 agreed with the statement that they had witnessed domestic violence. The percentage of 12-13 females fell to 2.56%, and the 14-15 had a more strongly disagree response, at 5.13%. In male students, the highest percentage of 14-15-year-olds reported being subjected to violence (10.26%), which shows that with age the awareness or experience of violence increases. Notably, no strong agreement was reported by 16-17-year-old males (5.3%).

Overall, 46.15% of the respondents strongly agree with the statement and 17.95% agree. But, there also is a significant amount (15.38%) of them strongly disagrees and 10.26% are neutral. This suggests that many respondents, especially across age groups, were able or willing to admit to having seen physical abuse when they either strongly

agreed or agreed with the statement. These figures indicate some troubling trends regarding domestic violence among respondents.

Table 4.6: Seeing a victim of physical violence

I have ever seen a victim of physical violence						
Category	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
JHS 1						
Female						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%	0.00%	5.13%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	7.69%	10.26%
Male						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	2.56%	2.56%	10.26%
JHS 2						
Female						
12-13	2.56%	5.13%	0.00%	10.261%	0.00%	17.95%
14-15	5.13%	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%	12.82%
Male						
12-13	5.13%	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	10.26%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%
JHS 3						
Female						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%
14-15	5.13%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%
16-17	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%	7.69%
Male						
14-15	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	5.13%	10.26%
16-17	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%
Grand Total	25.64%	10.26%	10.26%	33.33%	20.51%	100.00%

Source: Field data (2025)

Table 4.6 presents the statement on seeing a victim of physical violence. Responses to the statement, "I have ever seen a victim of physical violence," show significant trends between ages and grade levels. Across age and sex, variations in responses were evident for students in JHS 1. Only a small percentage (2.56%) of females, aged 12-13, reported witnessing physical violence, with 2.56% neutral, and 2.56% reported agreeing with this statement. In fact, in the age group 14-15, a greater percentage of them (10.26%) reported exposure had occurred and of that group, 7.69% strongly

agreed. While for JHS 1 male, 5.13% neutral, 2.56% agree, 2.56% strongly agree. This suggests that older students especially females reported more witnessing of physical violence.

Early exposure to physical violence was prevalent in JHS2, particularly among younger females (12-13). The highest rate of acknowledgment (17.95%) was seen in this group, with 10.26% rated as positive and a smaller group negative. For 14-15 aged category of females, the recognition was slightly less (12.82%) with few of them disagreeing. Male students (12–13 years old) had a balanced response in exposure with 10.26% agree, and 5.13% strongly disagreed. In contrast, the lowest rate of recognition was found in males JHS 2 (14-15 years) where only 2.56% answered in the affirmative. These findings suggest that females in JHS 2 were more likely to report having witnessed victims of physical violence than males of the same age, and that older males were less exposed.

The reactions of JHS 3 students were in between, depending on age and gender. Among 12-13, the proportion who have ever witnessed physical violence was, actually, only 2.56% (down from JHS 2). Among 14-15-year-old females, 5.13% strongly disagreed (no other responses were recorded). Nonetheless, female's between 16-17 had a slightly higher acknowledgment rate (7.69%) in varying proportions across the response categories. For males, the highest acknowledgment constituted those with ages 14–15 at 10.26%, with strongly agreeing a total of 5.13%. On the other hand, older males (16-17 years old) displayed a lower acknowledgment rate (5.13%), the majority of whom either strongly disagreed or remained neutral. These findings indicate that younger (14-15 years old) male students in JHS 3 have been more likely to witness the victims of physical violence.

In general, 33.33% of total respondents agreed that they witnessed a physical violence victim, of which 20.51% strongly agreed. Yet, 25.64% disagreed vehemently and 10.26% abstained which is to say not all students had the same experiences. The agreement rate was highest among younger females in JHS 2 (12-13 years) and younger males in JHS 3 (14-15 years). Thus, this trend shows that since being exposed to physical violence was more likely with females at JHS 2, this changed towards males at JHS 3. These results draw attention to concerns regarding students' exposure to physical violence in their surroundings and across the age and gender groups, differences of fractions of a percent suggest potentially different experiences or perceptions.

Table 4.7: Feelings unsafe in the home

I feel unsafe in my home because of conflicts among family members						
Category	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
JHS 1						
Female						
12-13	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	5.13%
14-15	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	2.56%	10.26%
Male						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	7.69%	0.00%	10.26%
JHS 2	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Female						
12-13	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%	5.13%	7.69%	17.95%
14-15	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%	7.69%	12.82%
Male						
12-13	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	2.56%	10.26%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%
JHS 3	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Female						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	5.13%
16-17	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	7.69%
Male						
14-15	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%	2.56%	2.56%	10.26%
16-17	2.56%	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%
Grand Total	12.82%	10.26%	7.69%	28.21%	41.03%	100.00%

Source: Field data (2025)

Table 4.7 presents the distribution in relation to feelings unsafe in the home. Factors of age and gender influence students' feelings of unsafety at the JHS 1 level. 5.13% of the 12-13 aged females feel unsafe and 2.56% are strongly agree that they feel unsafe in their home because of family conflicts. For females aged 14-15, slightly more (10.26%) feel unsafe (2.56% strongly agree, 5.14% agree). This indicates that insecurity at home also rise for the females in JHS 1 as they grow older. 10.26% of 12-13 years old males feel themselves unsafe at home, 7.69% agreed and 2.56% reported neutral. These results also suggest that there is no measure of insecurity for males aged 14-15, meaning that at this level, younger males may be more vulnerable to conflict with families than older males (a finding not shared by females).

At the JHS 2 level, there is a clear trend that females report much higher levels of feeling unsafe than males. As the most impacted group overall, 17.95% of females from 12 to 13 report feeling unsafe. This is composed of 7.69% strongly agreeing, 5.13% agreeing and 2.56% neutral. This indicates that females at this level in early adolescence tend to have increased family discord or perceive it more intensely than the others. For females 14-15 years old, 12.82% report feeling unsafe, with 7.69% strongly agree and 2.56% agree. Although this rating was lower than that of the 12-13-year-old females, it is still unambiguously high, which suggests that JHS 2 is a crucial moment in the life of the students, particularly females, where students feel much more family-related distress. This is similar to JHS 1 males with 10.26% feelings of unsafety among 12-13 years. The percentages are a bit different with 5.13% agreed and 2.56% strongly agreed. Yet, among 14-15-year-old males, only 2.56% feel unsafe, leaving them as the 'least affected' demographic (at this level). This indicates that male counterparts, especially males aged 14-15, are more secure in these family conflicts than female counterparts.

Students report lower feeling of unsafe at home at the JHS 3 level than at the JHS 1 and 2. In JHS 2, only 2.56% of females aged 12-13 feel unsafe, which is significantly lower than the insecurity displayed by younger age groups. There are declines as well for females in the 14-15 age range, where 5.13% claim they don't feel safe, and for females in the 16-17 range, in which the percentage is slightly higher at 7.69%. As suggested by the rise at age 16-17, some older pupils may be still plagued by long-standing family disputes yet the overall proportion is still smaller than compared to their younger peers. Ages 14-15 are particularly affected, with 10.26% of males feeling unsafe due to this kind of sexual harassment. In comparison, males aged 14-15 reported much lower levels of insecurity in JHS 2. This indicates that conflicts between members of the household begin to affect males from JHS 3 more than they did before, and the increasing burden of responsibility or attention to what is happening in the house may underpin this finding. When the data for male respondents aged 16-17 is stratified, their percentage of claiming to feel unsafe is 5.13% - lower than that of females aged 16-17 (7.69%). That is, all older students are less insecure than all younger students, but females are more affected than males at all grade levels.

Across all levels, shorthand emerges, comparing age groups. According to the findings from the survey, the age group of 12-13 years old feels the most unsafe with females in the JHS 2 age group being the group that reported the highest level of feeling unsafe (17.95%). Translation: early adolescence, when family conflict may be most psychologically damaging. The trend varies by gender among students aged 14 to 15. Females in JHS 2 report being scared often or most of the time (12.82%) while JHS 3 of males also shows a significant percentage (10.26%). This means that while females experience increased feelings of insecurity earlier (in JHS 2), males experience more time spent in states of insecurity at JHS 3. For 16–17-year-old students, the feeling of

unsafe is even lower, with females (7.69%) and males (5.13%) reporting lower figures than their younger counterparts. It could indicate that older students have learned to cope, are more independent, or that family dynamics have improved.

Table 4.8: Threats and intimidations

I have felt threatened or intimidated by someone in my household						
Category	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
JHS 1						
Female						
12-13	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	5.13%	10.26%
Male						
12-13	5.13%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%	10.26%
JHS 2						
Female						
12-13	5.13%	0.00%	5.13%	5.13%	2.56%	17.95%
14-15	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	7.69%	2.56%	12.82%
Male						
12-13	0.00%	5.13%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	10.26%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%
JHS 3						
Female						
12-13	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%
14-15	0.00%	5.13%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%
16-17	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	0.00%	7.69%
Male						
14-15	5.13%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%	10.26%
16-17	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%	0.00%	5.13%
Grand Total	23.08%	12.82%	10.26%	33.33%	20.51%	100.00%

Source: Field data (2025)

Table 4.8 present the distribution on how students feel threatened in the home. There are sex and age differences regarding feeling threatened at the JHS 1 level. There is no strong agreement here among females aged 12-13 either, only 5.13% say they feel threatened. This implies that in most home environments, younger females in JHS 1 are not intimidated. On the other hand, 10.26% of females aged 14-15 feel threatened and a certain percentage strongly agrees to some extent. This illustrates that at a time

when females become increasingly vulnerable to not feeling safe at home. While currently, 10.26% of males aged 12-13 report feeling threatened to some degree, which are a wide range of responses. While still a low number, it demonstrates that younger males might feel more intimidated when compared to similar aged females.

There is a particularly sharp rise in feeling threatened, especially among females, in JHS 2. Female aged 12-13 found in feeling threatened, where 17.95% of those aged 12-13 agree to some extent that they feel threatened. This population, across all ages, had the highest rate of students who reported feeling intimidated, which may reflect family turbulence and rawness of the age group in question. For females aged 14-15, it is 12.82%, but still it is lower than what it was for 12-13-year-olds. Of males in the same age group, just 2.56% said they felt threatened, leaving a disparity in intimidation at home, with females more likely to feel scared. The percentage of males in JHS 2 (12-13 years old) who feel threatened is 10.26%, Similar to females, whereas the intensity of shares makes it such that males feel less strongly. Among population ages 14-15 years old for males only 2.56% feels threatened, again illustrating the decline of feeling threatened in males as they age.

Considering JHS 3 students, just 2.56% of females aged 12-13 indicated they feel threatened, a huge decline from JHS 2. For 14–15-year-old females, it increases slightly to 5.13%. The numbers are lower than for younger students, but are still affected, with 7.69% of among the oldest females (16-17 years old) reporting feeling threatened. Meanwhile, as few as 5.13% of male JHS 3 students aged 16-17-year-old also feel threatened, much less than other males.

Overall, students were most likely to report feeling threatened or intimidated and overall younger students were more likely to do so, with females in JHS 2 (12–13 years of age) being the highest reporting group. This feeling tends to diminish as students get older, which might imply that they develop better affinity-coping skills or are fortunate enough to enjoy better family situations. While females consistently experience greater levels of intimidation as males, the gap closes in JHS 3. The implication of these findings is that younger students, and particularly females in JHS 2, are most vulnerable to perceived threats at home.

Table 4.9: Experience of friends and classmates on abuse

Some of my friends and classmates share with me abuses they experience at home.						
Category	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
JHS 1						
Female						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	5.13%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	7.69%	10.26%
Male						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	10.26%	10.26%
JHS 2						
Female						
12-13	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	12.82%	17.95%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	7.69%	12.82%
Male						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	7.69%	10.26%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%
JHS 3						
Female						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	5.13%
16-17	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7.69%	7.69%
Male						
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	5.13%	10.26%
16-17	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	5.13%
Grand Total	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	20.51%	76.92%	100.00%

Source: Field data (2025)

Table 4.9 exposes the problem of friends and classmates abuse in any shape at home. The table shows responses to the statement, “Some of my friends and classmates share with me abuses they experience at home,” disaggregated by gender, age group and year in school. For JHS 1, the overall responses from females are hardly visible, with only 5.13% of 12-13-year-olds strongly agreeing and 7.69% of 14-15-year-olds strongly agreeing. The gender of older respondents did not have as pronounced an effect on the distribution of responses but there was a marginally higher percentage of males agreeing with the statement, as 10.26% of 12-13-year-old males strongly agreed with the statement.

When it comes to JHS 2 that trend changes around, more notably for females. This reduces to 17.95% of females aged 12-13 agreeing, 12.82% strongly agreeing, this being the second largest demographic after females aged 14-15. Responses among males are even less, with only 7.69% of 12-13-year-olds and 2.56% of 14-15-year-olds responding strongly agree. This indicates that this age group is somewhat more aware of abuse than their friends, especially for females.

In JHS 3, the recognition of abuse between peers increases. 7.69% of females aged 16-17 strongly agree, so it appears that older students are more inclined to agree with such experiences. Male responses for JHS 3 show a slight upward trend, as 5.13% (14-15 – 16-17) in strong agreement. Nevertheless, the total amount of males experiencing those feelings is significantly fewer than the number of females stating these feelings.

In general, the total responses indicate that an overwhelming majority (76.92 %) of students, especially those in the 14-15 and 16-17 age brackets, strongly agree with the statement. As students are getting older, they increasingly draw attention to abuse shared by classmates while young females are reporting higher awareness of the abuse

compared to their male classmates. This is a reflection of the prevalence of the issue among youth, especially as they move through school.

Table 4.10: Frequency of domestic violence in the family

Domestic violence is a frequent thing in my family						
Category	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
JHS 1						
Female						
12-13	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	5.13%
14-15	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	5.13%	10.26%
Male						
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7.69%	2.56%	10.26%
JHS 2						
Female						
12-13	7.69%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	7.69%	17.95%
14-15	5.13%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	2.56%	12.82%
Male						
12-13	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	5.13%	10.26%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%
JHS 3						
Female						
12-13	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	5.13%
16-17	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	7.69%
Male						
14-15	5.13%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	0.00%	10.26%
16-17	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	5.13%
Grand Total	30.77%	0.00%	0.00%	25.64%	43.59%	100.00%

Source: Field data (2025)

Issues on whether or not domestic violence occurs in families are shown in Table 4.10. The level of awareness of domestic violence seems low in JHS 1. Only 2.56% of 12-13-year-olds females and 5.13% of 14-15-year-old females strongly agree with the statement, which indicates the majority of females do not believe domestic violence is common in their households in this age class. Most JHS 1 males agree well and slightly more recognition at 7.69%. This shows a slightly greater recognition of domestic violence among male students at this stage.

JHS 2 students observed a growing awareness, especially for females. With the 12–13-year-old females, for which 7.69% agree and the same strongly agree, which is a significant increase from JHS 1. For females of the 14 -15 age group, there is still some recognition in the metric, as 5.13% agree the statement and 2.56% strongly agree. For the males, the trends are similar although the percentages are lower. Among 12–13-year-olds, 2.56% agree and 5.13% strongly agree, whereas among the 14–15-year age group, 2.56% strongly agree that they are aware of domestic violence.

In JHS 3, there was mixed, but a slightly heightened awareness of domestic violence according to the data. Among females, acknowledgement increases with age of students. For students aged 14-15-year-olds, 5.13% strongly agree; for 16-17-year-olds, 5.13% strongly agree indicating that they recognize that domestic violence is common. Among males also, there is a similar pattern with 5.13% of both 14-15 and 16-17-year-old students strongly agreeing and suggesting that male students in these age groups are also increasingly identifying domestic violence.

The total also shows that most students (43.59%) feel domestic violence happen in their families, and 25.64% agree with the statement. Meanwhile, 30.77% strongly disagree with this idea, and no students stated neutral or disagree. However, this divergence in findings attests that the majority of the students acknowledge domestic violence. The students in higher grades, especially females, recognize domestic violence very well, and younger students, mainly males, have lower level of recognition.

4.4 Relationship between Domestic Violence and Academic Performance

This section is focused on the association between domestic violence (DV) and academic performance (AP) amongst students of selected Junior High School in Bawjiase (JHS). It focuses on how domestic violence affects students' focus in school, broken down by the level of agreement that home life makes it difficult for students to focus in class. The academic performance is further segregated into three categories — that of having declined, improved, or remained similar, based on students' experiences of domestic violence. The following tables present the analyses.

Table 4.11: Frequency distribution of difficulty in concentrating because of peace at home

Category	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
JHS 1	0.00%	7.69%	0.00%	12.82%	5.13%	25.64%
Female	0.00%	5.13%	0.00%	10.26%	0.00%	15.38%
12-13	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	5.13%
14-15	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	7.69%	0.00%	10.26%
Male	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%	5.13%	10.26%
12-13	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%	5.13%	10.26%
JHS 2	12.82%	7.69%	0.00%	7.69%	15.38%	43.59%
Female	12.82%	7.69%	0.00%	5.13%	5.13%	30.77%
12-13	7.69%	5.13%	0.00%	5.13%	0.00%	17.95%
14-15	5.13%	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	12.82%
Male	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	10.26%	12.82%
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	7.69%	10.26%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%
JHS 3	7.69%	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%	17.95%	30.77%
Female	5.13%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	10.26%	15.38%
12-13	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%
14-15	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	5.13%
16-17	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7.69%	7.69%
Male	2.56%	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%	7.69%	15.38%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	7.69%	10.26%
16-17	2.56%	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%
Total	20.51%	17.95%	0.00%	23.08%	38.46%	100.00%

Source: Field data (2025)

Table 4.11 presents the distribution of respondents based on difficulty in concentrating because of peace at home. In the case of JHS 1 students, 25.64% of the overall respondents reported different degrees of having difficulty, with 12.82% who agreed and 5.13% who strongly agree. In other words, 5.13% of males, especially the 12–13-year group indicated it is difficult for them to concentrate in school because of peace in their home as opposed to females. In JHS 1, a smaller percentage of females agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (10.26%).

In JHS 2, the number of students observed in difficulty increases by 43.59%, accounting for 7.69% of agrees, 15.38% strongly agree. Differences between genders are more striking, where 30.77% of females experience some form of difficulty, peaking in the 12–13-year age group (17.95%). Also, the males in this group showed lower responses of 12.82% overall and most of the responses came from 14-15 age group.

Again, 31.63% (2.56% agree; 17.95% strongly agree) of JHS 3 students reported such problem overall. Difficulty was found in 15.38% of females, who most commonly fell into the 14-15 age range. 15.38% of males, an even higher percentage of respondents, indicated they were having difficulty. Some responses were even recorded for the JHS 3 age group of 16-17, in which 7.69% strongly agreed.

The Table shows overall totals of agreeing responses (23.08%) and strong agreeing (38.46%) with 17.95% disagreeing and 20.51% strongly disagreeing. The data show that the presence of peace at home appears to significantly affect a number of students' ability to concentrate, and more students in the 14-15 age bracket reported having difficulty concentrating, especially more so in JHS 2 and 3 sectors.

Table 4.12: Frequency distribution of domestic violence and academic performance

Category	Declined	Improved	Remained the Same	Total
JHS 1	5.13%	0.00%	20.51%	25.64%
Female	0.00%	0.00%	15.38%	15.38%
12-13	0.00%	0.00%	5.13%	5.13%
14-15	0.00%	0.00%	10.26%	10.26%
Male	5.13%	0.00%	5.13%	10.26%
12-13	5.13%	0.00%	5.13%	10.26%
JHS 2	17.95%	12.82%	12.82%	43.59%
Female	7.69%	12.82%	10.26%	30.77%
12-13	2.56%	7.69%	7.69%	17.95%
14-15	5.13%	5.13%	2.56%	12.82%
Male	10.26%	0.00%	2.56%	12.82%
12-13	7.69%	0.00%	2.56%	10.26%
14-15	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%
JHS 3	17.95%	7.69%	5.13%	30.77%
Female	10.26%	5.13%	0.00%	15.38%
12-13	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	2.56%
14-15	2.56%	2.56%	0.00%	5.13%
16-17	7.69%	0.00%	0.00%	7.69%
Male	7.69%	2.56%	5.13%	15.38%
14-15	7.69%	0.00%	2.56%	10.26%
16-17	0.00%	2.56%	2.56%	5.13%
Total	41.03%	20.51%	38.46%	100.00%

Source: Field data (2025)

Table 4.12 points out how domestic violence affects the academic performance of students at various stages of education. In JHS 1, 25.64% took the survey and 5.13% stated that their academic performance had deteriorated. Notably, none of the student respondents indicated any improvement, while 20.51% reported that their performance did not change. When classified accordingly to gender, males indicated a decrease of 5.13% and no betterment, whilst females indicated exactly no changes in any of the items evaluated.

From these students, the overall shows 43.59% response rate among JHS 2 students, 17.95% mentioned a decline in academic performance: 12.82% noted an improvement. The same proportion (12.82%) stated that there had been no difference. The rate of academic decline was slightly lower among female students (7.69%) than their male counterparts (10.26%), but more females reported improvement (12.82%) than males (0.00%). For males, most of the responses were from students aged 12-13.

In JHS 3, 30.77% responded about their academic performance, 17.95% said it was worse, 7.69% better and 5.13% unchanged. Females again had a higher percentage of academic declines (10.26%) than males (7.69%), and only a few showed improvements. The highest representation was in the 14-15 age category in males, while this pattern switched (in a mixed way) at the 16-17 age categories.

Overall, 41.03% of students said they performed poorly, 20.51% performed better and 38.46% said performance was unchanged. In addition, domestic violence affects academic performance negatively, particularly among students in JHS 2 and JHS 3, where high percentages of students reported a decline in performance. But across the sample, the influence of domestic violence on academic progress seems small.

Table 4.13: Relationship between domestic violence on academic performance

R 0.25 Model	R² 0.06 Effect size	Adj. R² (0.08) SE	Standard error 8.71 t Stat	P-value	F 0.45 Lower 95%	p 0.81 Upper 95%
Intercept	32.13	12.59	2.55	0.02	6.52	57.75
DV	(0.02)	0.31	(0.06)	0.95	(0.65)	0.61
SA	0.04	0.21	0.17	0.87	(0.39)	0.46
Age	1.24	2.54	0.49	0.63	(3.93)	6.40
Gender	(1.55)	3.02	(0.51)	0.61	(7.69)	4.59
Education level	1.82	2.43	0.75	0.46	(3.12)	6.76

Source: Field data (2025)

DV = Domestic violence, SA = School attendance

The regression analysis in Table 4.13 examines the relationship between domestic violence and academic performance, besides other variables such as age, gender, and level of education. The overall model has an R value of 0.25, indicating that the relationships involving these factors are generally weak. The R-square value is 0.06; this means that the variation in academic performance accounted for by domestic violence and the other variables in the model is just 6 percent. The overall p-value of 0.81 tells us that the model lacks statistical significance and therefore provides no good evidence of a meaningful relationship.

In respect of the direct effect of domestic violence on academic performance, the effect size is -0.02, with the p-value being 0.95. This shows that there is no evidence of a negative effect caused by domestic violence on academic performance.

In terms of the age of students, its effect size has a value of 1.24, while its p-value is 0.63. So, age does not largely have a significant effect on students' academic performances. Not significant means that differences in age of students (12–13 years, 14–15 years and 16–17 years) do not result in major differences in academic performance. Those differences, if they exist at all, are too small or inconsistent to be materially important. That shows age is not a significant factor affecting academic success and that other factors — like the learning environment/personal effort — are more significant predictors.

Considering the effect of gender, it is expected to have an effect size of -1.55, with a p-value of 0.61, thus also showing no significant bearing on students' academic performance. Finally, education level has an effect size of 1.82 with a p-value of 0.46, which shows that there is no significant evidence to show its effect on academic performance. In the main analyses, it becomes evident that domestic violence and the

other variables studied do not have a significant effect on academic performance; hence, there are no significant relations between these variables and the students' academic performance.

Table 4.14: Mediation effect of school attendance on domestic violence and academic performance

Mediation estimates									
Effect	Label	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Interval		Z	p	% Mediation	
				Lower	Upper				
Indirect	a × b	0.00403	0.0543	-0.0916	0.144	0.0742	0.941	6.01	
Direct	C	-0.0631	0.2441	-0.5392	0.419	-0.2584	0.796	93.99	
Total	c + a × b	-0.0591	0.236	-0.5006	0.424	-0.2502	0.802	100	
Path estimates									
DV	→	SA	Label	Estimate	95% Confidence Interval		Z	P	
					SE	Lower			Upper
DV	→	SA	a	0.1637	0.173	-0.176	0.499	0.947	0.344
SA	→	AP	b	0.0246	0.208	-0.353	0.469	0.119	0.906
DV	→	AP	c	-0.0631	0.244	-0.539	0.419	-0.258	0.796

Source: Field data (2025)

Table 4.14 presents the mediation analysis of school attendance in the relationship between domestic violence and academic performance. From the results, it is seen that the indirect effect, which represents the pathway in which domestic violence affects performance through school attendance is as little as an estimate of 0.00403. The indirect effect is significant (95% CI: -0.0916, 0.144, $p = 0.941$). This suggests that the indirect effect is statistically insignificant, providing no basis to affirm that school attendance acts as a mediator between domestic violence and academic performance.

The analysis shows the direct effect, domestic violence decreases academic performance by -0.0631, with 95% CI (-0.5392, 0.419), with a p-value 0.796. This implies that domestic violence does not statistically significantly affect academic performance, and thus, there is not strong evidence that domestic violence directly affects academic performance.

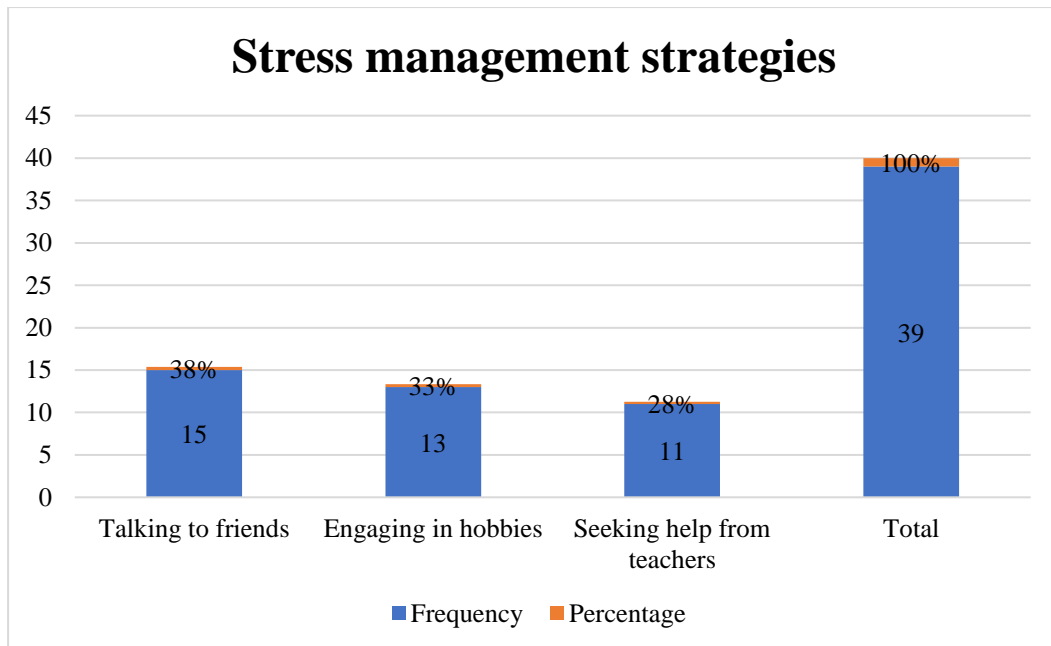
The overall effect including both direct and indirect pathways is estimated to be -0.0591. The results show a non-significant total effect with a 95% confidence interval from -0.5006 to 0.424 and $p=0.802$. This indicates that when both direct and indirect effects are taken into account, the general overall relationship between domestic violence and academic performance is not significant.

Mediation percentages show the relative percentage of the total effects of domestic violence on academic performance explained by school attendance as a mediator. In this analysis, school attendance (indirect effect) has only explain 6.01% of the total effect (domestic violence in academic performance) while the direct effect (the relationship between domestic violence and academic performance without the influence of school attendance) has accounted for 93.99%. That is to say, school attendance plays practically no role in the overall relationship, with the majority of the effect running direct, unmediated.

4.5 Coping Strategies Used by Students to Deal with Domestic Violence

Experiences

The aim of the researcher was to analyse the manners of coping with the situation chosen by students as a response to their experience of living through home violence. In this respect, the primary goal of the study was not only to establish the different ways through which students cope with the emotional, psychological, and physical influences of domestic violence but also to bring to light adaptive or maladaptive mechanisms students use in order to manage these effects. In understanding these coping strategies, the researcher aimed to bring out useful knowledge that might have great implications for informing interventions and support systems seeking to help students move out of challenges associated with domestic violence.



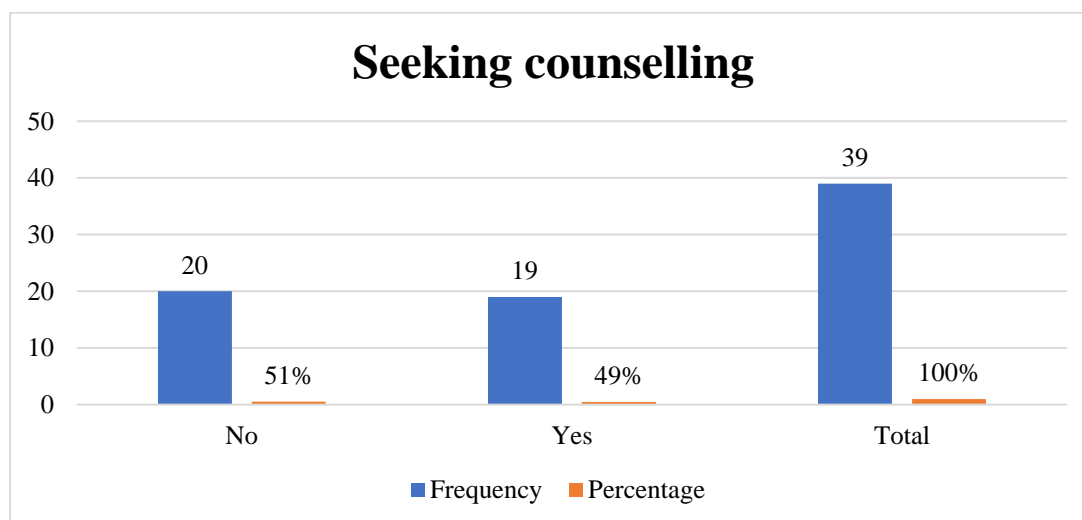
Source: Field data (2025)

Figure 4.1: Stress management strategies

4.5.1 Stress management strategies

Based on Figure 4.1, 38% of respondents said that they discussed the issue with friends, the most common strategy to cope with domestic violence (DV)-related stress. Pursuing hobbies comes next at 33% and 28% go to teachers for help. It reflects the fact that most students choose social support and personal activities as a primary source of coping strategies, and only a small part of students approached educational specialists for help. These strategies emphasize the significance of personal connections and self-care in dealing with DV-related stress.

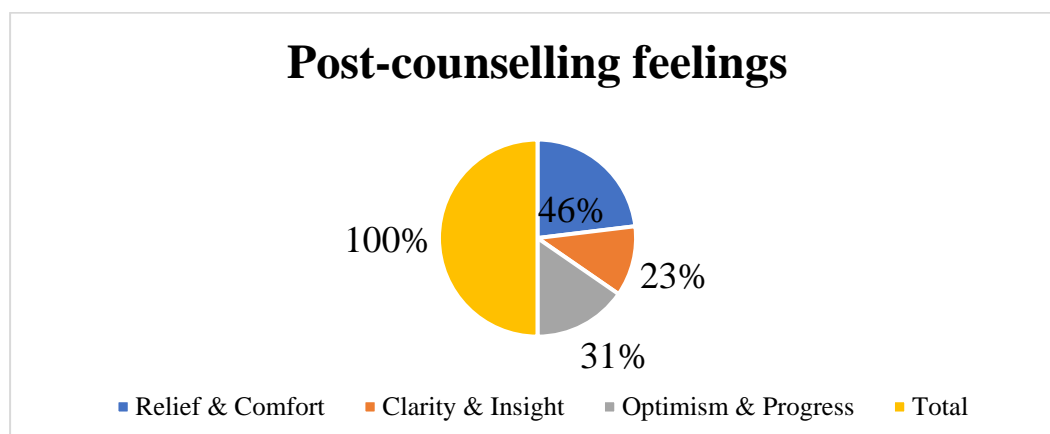
4.5.3 seeking counselling



Source: Field data (2025)

Figure 4.2: Seeking counselling

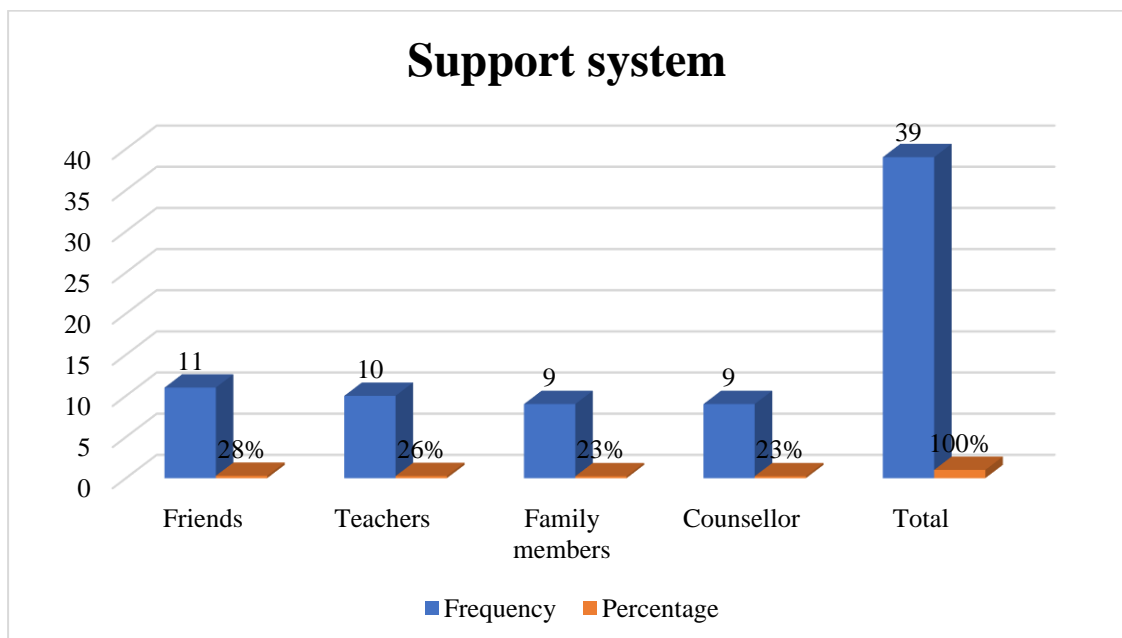
Based on Figure 4.2, it can be inferred that almost 50% of those students (49%) finished treatment with a therapist because of domestic violence (DV) (the remaining half (51%) do not collaborate with an advisor). The implication is that many students may require professional support to deal with DV but have not sought counselling. This displays the apparent gap in access to mental health aid, which means more need to be done to push students whose mental health goes unchecked.



Source: Field data (2025)

Figure 4.3: Post-counselling feelings

From Figure 4.3, the counselling sessions of students affected by domestic violence (DV) seem to have worked well. Almost half of all students (46%) said that they felt relief and comfort after their sessions, suggesting emotional peace given to students through support. Moreover, 31% of respondents stated they had hoped and felt they had made progress which suggested that the counselling made them feel they would be experiencing positive changes in their lives. (They now seem to understand that about 23% were clearer and more insightful.) In general, these findings indicate that counselling provided emotional support, instilled hope and helped students develop a more realistic perspective of their situations.

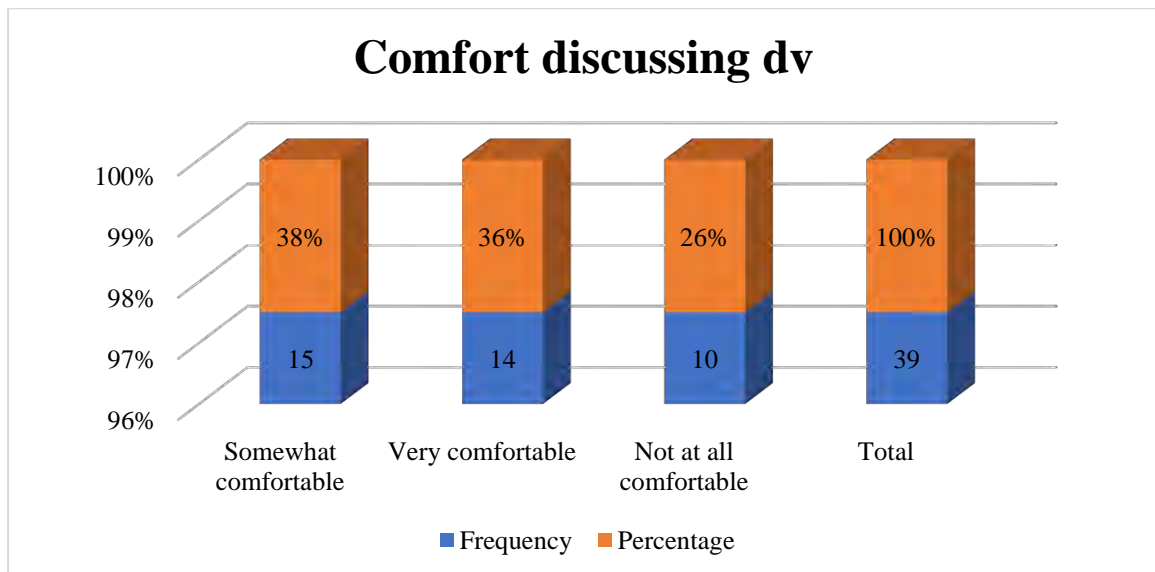


Source: Field data (2025)

Figure 4.4: *Support system*

From the figure, 28% of students reported friends as their first choice for discussing these concerns. The second most popular option was teachers (26%), followed at a distance by family members (23%) and counsellors (23% too). Although peer support is in many ways significant it appears students also look to trusted adults (teachers, counsellors) if they are having difficulties. The fairly even split among these sources of

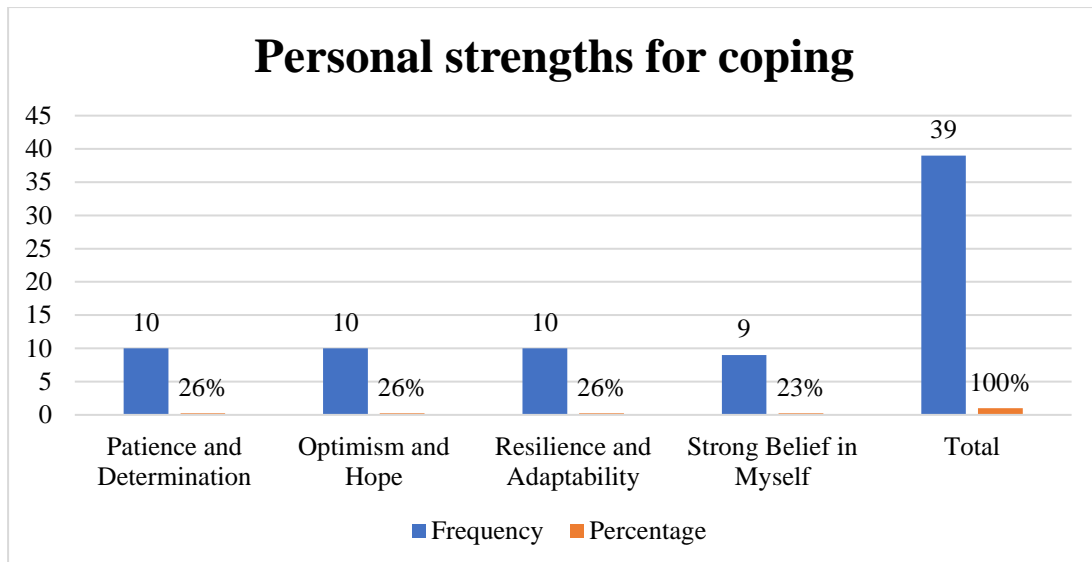
support implies that students are seeking a mix of emotional, academic, and professional support when navigating DV-related issues.



Source: Field data (2025)

Figure 4.5: Comfort discussing domestic violence

The data indicates that most students are at least somewhat comfortable talking to their friends about DV issues, with 38% of students reporting that they are "somewhat comfortable" and 36% reporting that they are "very comfortable." But 26% of students marked that they are not comfortable at all discussing DV with friends, which means a substantial number of students could experience anxiety or fear when talking about such sensitive themes. In general, the presentation of the findings demonstrates a mixed comfort level that many students feel supported by their peers but there is a group that indeed falls in line of not wanting to share their experience.



Source: Field data (2025)

Figure 4.6: Personal strength for coping

From Figure 4.6, 26% of students named personal strengths: patience and determination, optimism and hope, and resilience and adaptability. A smaller percentage, 23%, relies on a firm belief in themselves to whether the storm of what it takes to survive domestic violence (DV). This indicates that students value characteristics that aid them in overcoming hardship, thinking positively and adjusting in challenging conditions. Making use of your personal strengths also seems to have a significant impact on how students cope with the effects of DV in their lives.

Table 4.16: School performance participation

School performance participation	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	20	51%
No	19	49%
Total	39	100%

Source: Field data (2025)

Based on Table 4.16, 51% have performed at a school performance focused on mental health or coping strategies, while 49% have not. This means that 52% of students who have participated in well-being with coping strategies programs or activities which

indicates a good sign of participation. The fact that the split is almost equal also means that almost half those surveyed had little or no exposure to such initiatives, highlighting the need to ensure greater take up or possible embedding of mental health initiatives in schools.

Table 4.17: *Benefit of the program*

Benefit of the program	Frequency	Percentage
Very beneficial	20	51%
Somewhat beneficial	14	36%
No beneficial	5	13%
Total	39	100%

Source: Field data (2025)

According to the data presented in Table 4.17, most students reported that they found a program that addressed their mental health or coping strategies helpful, as 51% reported the program as "very beneficial." Thirty-six percent more described it as "somewhat beneficial," and 13 percent said the program was "not beneficial." The vast majority of students indicated that the experience was a positive one and as such that very few students thought that the experience had little impact. In general, these kinds of programs are impactful in support of students' mental health and coping skills.

4.6 Qualitative Data Presentation

This research attempts to explain how domestic violence influences students' performance and behaviour within schools based on the perspective of educators. The following sections represent the themes that emerged from the interview data.

4.6.1 Emotional and behavioural signs of distress

Educators were highly aware of the signs that a student might be experiencing or witnessing domestic violence, with emotional, physical and behavioural indicators appearing most salient. Several educators identified emotional instability and mental health struggles as critical signs of distress. For instance, Daniel, a teacher at Fianko D/A JHS, reported that sometimes students show “*mood swings, anxiety, and depression,*” and Edmond, a teacher at Bawjiase SDA JHS, described “*emotional instability like crying easily and being worried or unhappy.*” These emotional symptoms are also crucial with regard to functionalities needed to engage in school activities or control emotions, which are fundamental aspects of the learning process and personal evolution. Whenever they see these signs, educators can recognize signs of distress and offer needed help.

Physical signs of abuse were also mentioned as key indicators alongside the emotional indicators. Grace, a counsellor at Bawjiase SDA JHS, and Daniel both said “*unexplained injuries*” were a strong indicator of domestic violence. Grace also pointed to “*chronic fatigue*” as a frequent physical symptom, which may stem from the physical and emotional toll that domestic violence has on a student. These are important because students might not express it verbally but they do show physical signs that something is wrong. This emphasizes the need for educators to be aware of both the subtle and obvious physical signs, as they can be key to identify students experiencing abuse who may not disclose it otherwise.

Fear was another major theme in the responses and many teachers noted that students who are entangled in domestic violence live in fear and this mental state hinders open communication. Belinda, who teaches at Bawjiase SDA JHS, said students “*live in fear*

and may not communicate freely,” and Edward, a counsellor at Fianko D/A JHS, noted that these students often show a “fear of authority figures.” This fear is often translated out of the home environment, which is an often-unsafe space for children, into the school setting and causes students to be afraid to ask for help or talk with others. The emotional cost of living with constant fear can limit a student’s capacity to engage in school events and to form relationships, which presents an additional obstacle to obtaining the support they require.

More so, in addition to fear, educators noted that students displayed other responses to the trauma of domestic violence. Some students withdraw socially, described by Grace as “*sudden withdrawal from social situations,*” and by Eric, a counsellor at Okwabena SDA JHS, as “*isolation from peers.*” These students remained to themselves, not interacting with others, which could be a method of coping with their trauma. Other students reacted by acting out more aggressively and destructively. Edward cited “*aggressive behaviour,*” while Addo, a teacher at Fianko D/A JHS, mentioned “*rudeness, bullying and disregard for school rules.*” Social withdrawal and aggressive behaviour are two contrasting responses, also rooted in trauma from domestic violence, yet they surface in varying forms for each student. Educators need to be familiar with these behavioural patterns so that they can adjust their responses and interventions accordingly to best help students.

Finally, signs of neglect were described repeatedly in the findings as another recurring theme. Several educators added that students who appeared neglected at home often had physical signs of it, like a “*tattered look,*” as Eric noted, or “*lack of care in appearance,*” as Addo said. These external markers could speak to a lack of attention or even rudimentary care at the home that might be coupled with larger issues of abuse

or neglect. When students are neglected, it is an external reflection of the instability at home which can be useful for the educators to help the child to strengthen at various levels.

In summary, the results indicate that educators recognize a number of signs that might demonstrate domestic violence in a student. All of these signs include emotional symptoms such as mood swings and anxiety, physical signs like unexplained bruises and fatigue and changes in behaviour such as social withdrawal or aggression. Fear and the signs of visible neglect are also important data points for educators to look for. This reflects the fact that we collectively recognized these signs in many different kinds of students, and across many different schools. They highlight the need for timely identification and referral of at-risk students to appropriate domestic violence support services.

4.6.3 Emotional distress and academic performance

The results showed that violence at home causes so much psychological trauma that it spills over into students' ability to focus and do well academically. Emotional distress, caused by the conflicts at home, is a chief factor in cognitive difficulties. Students have "*difficulty concentrating and completing assignments,*" which said Daniel, a teacher at Fianko D/A JHS, was rooted in emotional instability. He also noted that this emotional turmoil impacts students' "*cognitive function and memory.*" This highlights the degree to which students' academic competencies are compromised when they are overwhelmed with the stress and anxiety of problems over which they have no control on the home front. Still, these emotional loads restrict their ability to concentrate and participate meaningfully in schoolwork, often making it difficult for them to meet academic standards.

Belinda, a Bawjiase SDA JHS teacher, had a similar response: “*students become emotionally disturbed ... and that makes it very difficult for them to concentrate.*”

Students, who are already dealing with emotional issues, find it hard to go for their lessons, and they end up failing, she stressed. Therefore, the correlation between emotional distress and difficulty focusing leads to the conclusion that students suffering from domestic violence are losing the battle within them as their brain is always fighting, followed by an inability to keep up with academics. This emotional distress is a pattern throughout the findings, where the emotional cost of domestic violence continues to act consistently as a hike to learning.

The link between emotional challenges and declining academic performance is also highlighted by Stella, a teacher at Okwabena SDA JHS, who listed “*poor academic performance*” as a common effect of “*high levels of anxiety and emotional distress.*”

Similarly, Edmond, a teacher at Bawjiase SDA JHS, said such emotional problems “ultimately result in loss of motivation and engagement in learning.” It should be stated that both answers highlight how students’ psychological distress not only impacts their cognitive functioning, but also depletes their motivation to interact with academic material. Students who suffer from anxiety, depression or terror from domestic violence have little motivation to attend classes, complete assignments or work toward their degrees. The lack of motivation leads to decreased academic performance and, unfortunately, a vicious cycle where the more they fall behind, the harder it is to catch up.

Stress proved to be yet another considerable barrier to academic success. Due to stress, students “*struggle to do homework or participate in school activities,*” Edward, a counsellor at Fianko D/A JHS, said. This indicates that the gravity of emotion students

brings over from their home life results in being in a state that inhibits them from fully functioning in a school setting. Likewise, Eric, a counsellor at Okwabena SDA JHS, noted that the students' "*overall performance suffers due to the overwhelming stress they experience outside of school.*" The stress of domestic abuse not only distracts students from focusing but also drains them of energy and motivation, resulting in poor academic performance. The results show that students' felt-emotional burdens from their personal life degrade their academic performance by making it challenging for them to comply with classroom expectations.

Absenteeism and truancy were also key parts of students' struggles with academic success. Grace, a high school counsellor at Bawjiase SDA JHS, blamed truancy directly on "*missing instructional periods*", which she said "*contributes to poor academic performance.*" Adding to this view, Addo, a teacher at Fianko D/A JHS, said students who were mentally or physically disconnected from school "*miss learning opportunities*" that could affect their academic performance. These responses emphasize the way that physical absence from school and mental detachment from the classroom both help to leave students behind academically. Whether students are missing school as a result of emotional turmoil or cannot concentrate when they are in class, their academic progress is impeded, causing academic difficulties to persist long term.

It must be stated therefore, the results indicate that domestic violence has a significant impact on students' academic performance, as emotional distress, cognitive impairment, stress, absenteeism, and truancy all lead to poor academic performance. The answers given by Daniel, Belinda, Stella, Edmond, Edward, Eric, Grace and Addo invariably highlight the emotional toll of domestic violence as a significant contributor

to students' academic difficulties. The family instability and domestic stress these students face at home directly hinder their ability to focus, learn, and succeed in school. Somewhat less but still important, these results add to the body of work indicating that educators and counsellors must not only be aware of obstacles faced by these students but also help them clear those hurdles to accomplish academic retention and achievement.

4.6.4 Support systems for affected students

The findings showed most schools handle students experiencing issues such as domestic violence in different ways, but counselling is a big focus. At the Bawjiase SDA JHS, a teacher named Belinda explained, "*School counsellors and teachers collaborate towards reaching out to students who they think need help and support.*" This indicates the need for a more cross-collaborative approach that includes a dual responsibility of teachers to help identify students with need of assistance and counsellors to provide direct resources for those students. In the same vein, Stella, who works with Okwabena SDA JHS as a teacher stated that "*the counselling team interacts with the classroom teachers as well as the parents of the students in an effort to address such student issues collaboratively?*" This means this is a family system that the degree to which it is involved creates a stronger web of support, and addressing the needs of the student at school and at home. These answers highlight the need for a global approach to student wellbeing, where partnership of key player is promoted to provide optimal support.

Edward also noted that "*students can access counsellors, while social workers do outreach to link families with external resources,*" adding another dimension to the support system at Fianko D/A JHS. This broadens the range of support agencies

available, beyond the school, adding support and resources. It highlights the need for a broader, community-based support network to come into play, one that provides the aid that students and their families require through the collaboration of teachers and social workers. Taking this approach means that student' emotional, social and academic needs are addressed not only in the classroom, but within a framework of their lives.

There are academic supports in place in schools to help students deal with emotional distress in addition to counselling. Daniel, a teacher at Fianko D/A JHS, explained that *“students who suffer emotional or mental distress that affects the school process are given additional time to submit their assignments.”* This shift demonstrates the school's attempt to reconcile high academic standards with the realities of challenges students might encounter at home. The flexibility allows students to complete their work at their own pace without worry or overwhelm, necessary for kids affected by devastating emotional or psychological trauma. *“Teachers still communicate regularly with students and provide flexibility,”* echoed Eric, a counsellor at Okwabena SDA JHS. Also, this underlines the need of continuing communication and offering flexibility so that students remain connected to their learning even when outside factors might interfere with their focus and participation.

In addition, schools partner with outside organizations to offer specialized resources. Addo, who teaches at Fianko D/A JHS, explains that his school *“works with local authorities and child protection agencies, helping to bring professional knowledge and access to a network of support.”* This joint effort ensures students have access to expert assistance when needed, especially if the school's own resources cannot match the demands of the situation. These partnerships come as a safety net for students and

ensure that, from both educational and social service perspectives, their needs are met in a holistic way.

Grace, who works as a counsellor at Bawjiase SDA JHS, noted that her school “*has mentoring programs, mental health resources, and after-school programs.*” These initiatives aim to establish emotional support, sense of belonging, and a productive outlet for students' emotions. Mentorship programs and after-school activities especially foster a sense of community and belonging, both of which are essential to helping students overcome the challenges of trauma. These programs alleviate the stress and trauma that can be inflicted by a challenging home environment, giving students a space to feel safe and talk to trusted adults.

Finally, Edmond, who is a teacher at Bawjiase SDA JHS, noted that the school’s “*counselling initiatives have made a difference in students' behaviour and academics.*” This statement highlights and reinforces the immense value counselling and similar support services bring to a student’s overall well-being. It shows the existing support measures do not merely assist students in overcoming their emotional difficulties, but also effectuate better academic performance and thus demonstrate a direct correlation between emotional health and academic attainment. When students feel supported emotionally, they are more likely to get involved with their studies and do well in school.

To conclude, the research indicates a variety of ways schools attempt to assist students with challenging home lives through support measures such as guidance counselling, alternate approaches to learning, partnership programs, mentoring and after school programs. These methods complement each other to form a safe space where students feel cared for both academically and personally. It is crucial that teachers, counsellors,

and external organizations work together to meet the needs of students affected by domestic violence. When successfully employed, these strategies support students in overcoming challenges and thriving academically and emotionally.

4.5.6 Training on recognizing domestic violence

The results found that many educators viewed training in recognizing signs of domestic violence in their pupils as extremely effective, augmenting their observation and intervention capabilities. And several participants pointed to the awareness and education building that such training naturally affords. A typical response is, "*I have some training that made me aware of signs of domestic violence,*" says Daniel, a teacher at Fianko D/A JHS. That means the training equipped him with the knowledge and tools to identify signs of domestic violence he may not have recognized otherwise. This awareness is critical because it helps educators recognize those silent signs that students might be experiencing violence at home, prompting early detection and supporting students where they need it. But some participants reported not receiving such training at all, which can leave educators unable to notice these signals, or, worse, unable to offer timely help.

With this in mind, Belinda, a teacher at Bawjiase SDA JHS exclaimed, "*Yes, indeed the training has opened new channels of counselling for the affected students*". This shows how training does not just give educators knowledge about domestic violence indicators but also real tools to help students. What they learn from training and development translates into specific actions to support students in need. This cements the notion that just being aware is not enough; we must teach actionable methods of intervention to actually help the students.

Meeting the adaptive challenge of the data, Stella, a teacher at Okwabena SDA JHS, spoke about the opportunity to strengthen the cultural and emotional aspects at the heart of the training: “*The training has cultivated a supportive culture in my school, and has increased the extent to which I respond sensitively*”. This highlights how important it is to create a culture within school that is compassionate and inclusive, especially for kids coming from homes impacted by domestic violence. Teachers responding sensitively make schools a safe-place to seek help, participate and face their fears.

A counsellor from Fianko D/A JHS (R4), Edward, said: “*The training has increased my confidence in being able to identify and address issues my students might be facing.*”

This points to the importance of training in confidence-building, something that is vital for educators, who are frequently first responders to kids in crisis. With the knowledge and grace to navigate such intricate matters in a sensitive manner, educators can find their footing even in challenging situations in a manner that supports student well-being. Without that confidence, educators might not intervene, allowing students to get into challenging situations.

For Grace, a counsellor at Bawjiase SDA JHS (R5), the training she took part in transformed the way that she relates with her students and made her be more sensitive to their needs. This answer further emphasizes the need to understand students’ emotional and psychological needs deeply. Through training, educators become more aware of the challenges that students face and learn how to respond with kindness and care. This encourages stronger educator-student relationships which develop trust so that students feel comfortable reaching out for assistance when necessary.

Eric, who is a counsellor at Okwabena SDA JHS (R6), mentioned that the training “*improved on trauma-informed practice in the classroom.*” This reflects an increasing awareness of trauma-informed practices in education, meaning that not only are educators trained to work with victims’ survivors of all kinds of trauma, including domestic violence, sexual violence. By developing an awareness of how trauma affects behaviour and learning, educators can differentiate their practice to meet the unique needs of students, offering the care needed to meet the nuances of their experiences.

Others were not as prepared as those participants indicted earlier. Addo, a teacher at Fianko D/A JHS, said, “*No formal training, but I read a lot about it, and I also rely on my observations.*” This means he relied on self-training, which is fine but not a substitute for formal training. Based on their own observation, they may miss the signs of domestic violence and this may interfere with their capability of working intervention when it is needed. It serves as a reminder of the importance of formal training programs accessible to all educators, so that the needs of all students will continue to be met. This is consistent with the response, “*No, I haven't participated in any training programs on this topic,*” expressed Edmond (a teacher at Bawjiase SDA JHS, who expressed frustration with the lack of said training. This response also reflects a major gap in training opportunities, particularly if educators are unaware of how to identify or engage with domestic violence for their students. Educators miss the signs of abuse without training and opportunity to intervene and unintentionally further endangering these students.

In short, the responses show that training for recognizing and responding to domestic violence is considered essential for educators — and to do so done greatly increases their ability to help students in tough home situations. Most people agree that training

muscles up awareness, sensitivity and confidence to act. Yet the advice imparted by Addo and Edmond emphasizes the necessity of providing formal training to all educators. Without adequate training, educators may not be fully equipped to appropriately identify and support students in crisis, which carries potentially severe implications for students' mental health and academic performance. This also implies the need for school leadership to focus on providing educators with detailed training programs that equip them with the necessary information and skills to tackle the complexities of domestic violence within the classroom.

4.7 Triangulation of Findings and Discussion

The triangulation of students' survey data and educators' qualitative comments highlights areas of alignment and disagreement in relation to the experiences on domestic violence, effect of domestic violence on student psychological and academic needs and the coping strategies that were adopted.

4.7.1 Domestic violence experience

Synthesizing the findings from students and educators, triangulation provides a fuller view of domestic violence experiences at Bawjiase Junior High School. The students' findings reveal significant differences in the experience of domestic violence based on gender and age. This further ignites the evidence that helps already present girls, especially those within younger age groups; tend to undergo higher levels of both emotional and physical abuse. For instance, in JHS 1, 10.26% females aged 14-15 who were threatened at home, and in JHS 2, 43.59% females strongly agreed they were assaulted emotionally. In older students (16-17) this difference was less pronounced, and the feeling of insecurity reduced with age (Gómez et al., 2018 Gómez, et al., 2018).

The data shows that young females, particularly in JHS 2, are the most susceptible to both forms of violence in the home.

Evidence collected through students' report in line with educators' opinion indicates numerous signs of domestic violence in emotional, behaviour, and physical aspects. The teachers noted emotional evidence of the children's struggles mood swings, social withdrawal and anxiety along with physical manifestations, including unexplained injuries and fatigue. Behavioural indicators comprised of rudeness, aggression and bullying, and neglect indicated by tatty clothing and signs of evident poor hygiene. Educators also said that students were highly reluctant to speak up if they felt something was wrong, likely out of fear or conditioning at home — another indication of the complicated intersection between domestic violence and students' mental and emotional well-being. These observations provide important examples of the ways domestic violence can present in students' lives and impact their behaviour and emotional state.

Based on both findings (i.e. from students and educators), it can be inferred that domestic violence effects significantly disrupt students' emotional, behavioural, and academic experiences. Female students face more emotional and physical abuse, students and teachers report. What you do see is insecurity and fear in students, and behaviour problems manifest in school, and that speaks to the upheaval in the lives of students who experience domestic violence. The findings also indicate that while younger students were more likely to experience domestic violence, they are still able to cope better than their older counterparts, although females in that category still reported greater levels of fear.

These findings complement the larger body of literature on domestic violence, defined here as a site of localized violence that inflicts “injury” on its participants. According to the WHO (2002) as well as other scholars including Akpan & Usoroh (2005) and UNICEF (2014), women fall victims of domestic violence in 99% of the time. The emotional and physical violence reported by the female students mirrors this larger trend. Additionally, Social Learning Theory (SLT) is a useful model for explaining how children exposed to domestic violence learn and replicate damaging behaviours. Children learn by imitating the actions of those around them, such as caregivers (Bandura, 1977). In this sense, students’ reports of emotional and physical violence and educators’ reporting of behaviour issues supports SLT’s claim that violence in the home affects students’ behaviour and approach to conflict resolution.

Looking from the lens of Resilience Theory also provides insight into how students cope with domestic violence. This theory highlights the roles of protective factors, like strong relationships with teachers, family, and community, to help students to adapt to and overcome adversity. It is clear from the findings that students exposed to domestic violence face significant emotional and behavioural challenges but that informal and formal supports can lead to the development of resilience which helps students cope with the negative effects on their educational and personal trajectories. Educators, specifically, hold responsibility to minister to the emotional needs of those dealing with domestic violence and provide encouragement and support for these students.

In summary, the triangulation of data from both students and educators provides a comprehensive picture of the impact of domestic violence on students at Bawjiase Junior High School. The evidence highlights the complicated reality of domestic violence, in which the influence of gender and age is paramount, underpinning how

students live with and manage with violence. Using Social Learning Theory and Resilience Theory as a theoretical framework, the study underscores the necessity to provide support more specifically for the academic and emotional needs of students who are affected by domestic violence. By focusing on the needs of the whole student, schools can better support students impacted by domestic violence and help them succeed academically and personally.

4.7.2 Relationship between domestic violence and academic performance

Triangulating findings from student and educator respondents, the relationship between domestic violence (DV) and academic performance (AP) at Bawjiase Junior High School is nuanced. Based on the students' self-reports, when asked, "Are you able to concentrate?" many of the students, particularly JHS 2 and JHS 3 students, reported that they struggle to concentrate which affects their academics because of the emotional and psychological effects of domestic violence. A good number of the students (41.03%) experienced a negative change in their academic performance, while others recorded no change or an improvement. However, in regression analysis, the relation between DV and academic performance was weak: $R^2 = 0.06$, meaning that merely 6% (meaning 0.06 of the variance) of the academic performance can be attributed to both DV and related variables. Moreover, the direct effect of DV on AP was not statistically significant ($p = 0.95$), while the mediation analysis confirmed a lack of significant indirect effect via school attendance.

Alternatively, educators' views offered further insight on the impact of DV on students' academic performance. In addition, teachers further saw the adverse effects of DV on those students in the forms of anxiety and depression, which directly prevented them from paying attention and focusing on their academic tasks. Schools also distract many

from engaging in unproductive behaviour such as school attendance, which was also a problem for some students. Because such emotional and psychological burdens created disengagement from school, educators said, students struggled to keep up in lessons and their academic achievement suffered.

The triangulation of these findings suggests that there is some evidence of a link between DV and academic performance, although the effect seems likely to be more nuanced. Students experienced psychological distress that interfered with their ability to focus, and educators noticed maladaptive behaviours that exacerbated their reluctance to engage academically. Nonetheless, based on the statistical analysis, practically the association between DV and AP is weak and not statistically significant. This weak direct effect could be associated with many factors, including the implementation of coping mechanisms or protective factors that can diminish the adverse effects of DV on academic performance such as support received from teachers and peers.

Consistent with the literature, the results are consistent with previous findings that indicate a negative relationship between DV and academic achievement. Research has consistently revealed that students who are exposed to domestic violence typically experience worse academic performance than their classmates (Njoroge et al., 2023; Okite, 2021). Studies have shown that students' emotional and behavioural issues as a result of DV, such as depression, anxiety, and concentration difficulties, can hinder their participation in classroom activities and academic performance (Mwale & Siwila, 2020). The disengagement and absenteeism experienced by students, as well as data provided by educators seem to echo Tsegba (2021)'s findings when they highlighted

emotional distress as one of the contributing factors to the problem of academic achievement.

According to Bandura (1977) Social Learning Theory (SLT) can be used to explain the impact of domestic violence on academic performance of students. Children raised in aggressive family environments may learn to replicate such behaviour, both in interpersonal relationships and with schoolwork. The impact of domestic violence on the emotional and psychological state of students can influence how they cope with stress and conflict and with failure, and that can affect academic performance as a result. Aggressive behaviours or emotional coping mechanisms may be negatively reinforced, and when integrated, some of these children may become more and more disengaged from school, mimicking the home behaviour.

Along with this perspective, resilience theory provides a different lens through which to examine the way in which student manages the impact of living in the face of domestic violence. According to this theory, even with high levels of adversity or risk, students can have greater resilience, through supportive relationships and resources. Educators, family, and community resources can be critical in helping students cope with domestic violence and maintain their academic performance. Despite the weak relationship between DV and AP shown in the regression analysis in the present study, resilience factors for example support from educators or peers may reduce some of the negative effects of DV on academic achievement (Van Breda, 2018). This could help explain differences in students' school performance, in spite of domestic violence.

Overall, the statistical indicators do not reveal a strong or statistically significant relationship between domestic violence and academic performance, but triangulated findings from students and their educators suggest that students' emotional and

behavioural challenges should be addressed if students are to engage positively with their studies. These findings coincide with existing evidence regarding the adverse effects of domestic violence on educational attainment, indicating that in addition to psychological factors, deteriorating domestic conditions can have significant negative impacts on students' academic outcomes. The relevance of both the Social Learning Theory as well as the Resilience Theory is seen on how domestic violence affects students and thus, the need for targeted interventions to help students build resilience and support them emotionally to alleviate the detrimental effects of domestic violence on their academic achievement.

4.7.3 Coping strategies used by students

Some students in selected Junior High Schools in Bawjiase have common coping strategies to cope with the effects (emotional, psychological, and physical) of living with domestic violence. Some of them asked for social support; 38% of the students talk about their problems with their friends, and 28% seek help from the teachers. This shows a significant inclination towards seeking guidance from peers and adults for distressing experiences. Meanwhile, 33% spend time on hobbies like reading, sports, or creative activities, using these as a form of personal coping.

Counseling also matters in students' coping mechanisms. Almost 49% of the students had sought professional counseling, 46% reported emotional peace and 31% expressed hope for positive changes in their lives. Yet, 51% of students had not utilized these services indicating the availability of these services is not wide spread or students are reluctant to seek professional help. Beyond the counseling, school programs that emphasize mental health awareness and coping strategies have been helpful. More than half of the students (51%) participated in programs like this, and the same percentage

(51%) also found the experience to be very valuable. This shows how well-structured interventions can aid students in overcoming the adversities of domestic violence. Moreover, students rely on their own capacities for resilience, optimism, and patience to help them cope with their experiences, signaling the importance of internal resources in addition to external support systems.

Educators witness the effects of family violence on students and see how various students try to navigate it. This manifests in many students as emotional distress, anxiety, and depression, adversely impacting their concentration and their ability to finish homework. Teachers indicated that students living with domestic violence beget uninspired, disengaged and emotionless youth in the classroom. Common coping mechanisms for affected students are avoidance and absenteeism. Many educators point out that emotional disturbances cause students to miss school, and that this is followed by poor academic performance. There are students who cannot manage their emotions which lead them to a situation of absenteeism and because of such absenteeism; they fail to cope with their studies effectively.

Teachers and counselors are pivotal support figures in students' coping mechanisms. Educators have a curriculum on how to give students with professional guidance and structured interventions "the tools to process what has happened to them." They also understand that many students struggle to ask for help, reinforcing the need for outreach programs that encourage students to take advantage of support systems available to them.

The results emphasize an important need for a hybrid support system for students dealing with domestic violence, he said. The object of certain personal resilience and certain hobbies definitely offers individual relief, but social and professional support

systems are vital to our emotional recovery and academic stability. The above percentage of students self-identifying and seeking help from a teacher or a mental health program affirms that a structured program works significantly well. But the resistance of some students to either talk with friends about domestic violence or seek professional counseling suggests substantial barriers to coping effectively. These concerns demand better outreach initiatives, easier access to mental health services, and normalization of talks about domestic abuse within student communities.

Social Learning Theory (1977) by Albert Bandura offers a lens through which to understand the coping strategies of students exposed to domestic violence. This theory posits that people learn new behaviors by observing role models and imitating them. Students can internalize coping strategies as a result of how they view domestic violence in the home or among peers. For instance, some individuals come to learn avoidance as a coping strategy used by family members they see engage in skipping school or not fully participating in class.

Reinforcement is also central to developing students' coping behaviors. If teachers offer help, or engaging in hobbies brings positive reinforcement like emotional relief or academic support students will likely continue using these coping mechanisms. On the other hand, if talking about domestic violence results in negative reinforcement ridicule, dismissal students might be even less inclined to look for help. This emphasizes the need to develop a conducive school environment, where students can speak about their experiences.

Another lens through which to view what happens to students impacted by domestic violence is resilience theory. This is articulation of resilience theory, where an individual is seen not only as a victim of their circumstance, but rather an entity that

has the potential to recover and thrive in adverse systems. As Van Breda (2018) explains, resilience is not a fixed trait, but a process that is influenced by internal strengths and external support systems.

From an academic perspective, these study findings are in line with the resilience theory, multiple students reported that they show resiliency through finding joy in hobbies, seeking help from peers and school programs, and relying on their teachers. That 73% of students report being emotionally at peace and 80% optimistic after counseling shows that guidance can arrange for resilience. That students remain resilient both before and after a crisis is a remarkable feat, but 51% of students having never sought professional counseling indicate that resources to build resilience are still not equitably accessible. All this points to a need for school-based mental health initiatives to become more inclusive and accessible.

Previous research corroborates both students' and educators' findings about coping strategies for domestic violence. According to McPherson (2002), this qualitative analysis is important for understanding the coping methods women use in domestic violence incidents; as she states, such methods are often the focus of intervention programs. In a similarly relevant context, Damra and Abujilban (2023) identify coping strategies that survivors of intimate partner violence utilize, noting that emotional, problem-focused, and avoidance-based strategies differ according to personal situations.

Winfield et al. (2023) built upon this work through an investigation of how children and their mothers navigate extreme domestic violence. Their results suggest that communication, planful avoidance, and turning to others are frequently used coping strategies. These include the relationship with coping strategies derived from the

selected Junior High School students in Bawjiase, it seems that social support combined with hobbies make up a part of an ideal functioning intervention.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarises the research on the effect of domestic violence on students' academic performance in the selected Junior High Schools in Bawjiase. It provides conclusion based on the findings and made appropriate recommendations in hopes of mitigating the negative effect of domestic violence and creating a more supportive learning environment. It also provides suggestions for further studies.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study was based on pragmatic philosophy and followed a sequential mixed-methods design: qualitative and quantitative. It targeted a population of 12 to 17-year-old students who have been exposed to or have witnessed domestic violence. The sample involved 39 students and 8 educators (counsellors and teachers). Instruments involved structured questionnaires for quantitative data and interviews with teachers and counsellors for qualitative data. It also utilised SPSS and Excel for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative findings to ensure full comprehension of the domestic violence and academic achievement relationship. The findings are presented in line with the following objectives; level of domestic violence experienced by students, relationship between domestic violence and academic, and coping strategies used by students to deal with domestic violence experiences.

5.1.1 Level of domestic violence

The study found that at selected Junior High Schools in Bawjiase, there were significant gender and age differences in students' experiences of domestic violence, including time that they saw physical violence and emotional abuse, and felt unsafe in their

homes. Ten-point two six percent of females and 2.56% of males aged 14-15 reported that they felt threatened among JHS 1 students. At the JHS two level, 17.95% of females aged 12-13 strongly avowed they felt threatened at home, the most of any age. JHS 2 also recorded the highest prevalence of emotional violence victim; 43.59% of the students strongly agreed that they were victims of emotional violence. For physical violence, JHS 2 girls again reported more exposure and a distortion of acceptance where many admitted to witnessing fathers beat mothers. This changed with age, especially by JHS 3 when insecurity and threat diminished but a higher percentage of females aged 16–17 reported some level of fear (7.69%), in comparison with males in the same age group (5.13%). The males, especially in JHS3, in the age range of 14-15, reported discomfort in being exposed to a more familial breakdown (10.26%), were implying that the rise in family conflicts is starting to be more apparent to them. Older students displayed greater adaptability in response to adverse conditions, less reported threat/insecurity, yet females remained more affected. The study found a correlation between age and gender in relation to suffering from domestic violence, especially in terms of emotional violence and physical violence with females aged 13-15 (JHS 2) being the most susceptible to both types of abuse at home.

The report detailed some of the emotional, behavioural and physical red flags educators saw in students who they thought may have been impacted by domestic violence. Emotional signs ranged from mood swings and anxiety to depression, and some students displayed visible signs of distress, such as crying often or walking around with an expression of worry. Physical symptoms included unexplained injuries and chronic fatigue. That came through as fear; students were reluctant to voice anything, likely due to some fear of authority or conditioning at home. In terms of behaviour, students tended towards social withdrawal or aggression (e.g. rudeness, bullying). Signs of

neglect such as the telltale sage of bent and torn clothes or stinky pants, indicating neglect at home were also observed at the hands of teachers. These observations demonstrate the extent to which domestic violence can interfere with children's well-being.

5.1.2 Relationship between domestic violence and academic performance

The study sought to establish the relationship between domestic violence and academic performance among Junior High School students. Based on the descriptive statistics findings, the study revealed a significant proportion of students (particularly JHS 2 and JHS 3) reported difficulty concentrating as a result of domestic violence, and this impact was greatest for females and students aged 12–13. Students gave their views on the effect of school closure on their studies as not affected 38.46% (601), affected by studies at home 41.03% (721) and affected by studies more effectively 20.51% (871). Based on the regression analysis, the study found a weak relationship between the dependent variable, domestic violence and independent variable, academic performance with an R of 0.25 and an R^2 of 0.06. This means that 6% of the variation in academic performance can be explained by the dependent variable and other variables (age, gender, education level). The overall model with p-value 0.81 indicates no statistically significant relationship. Furthermore, the direct effect of domestic violence on academic performance had an effect size of -0.02 ($p = 0.95$) meaning an insignificant negative effect. Again, the study found school attendance is not a mediator in the relationship between domestic violence and academic performance. This reflects the coefficient of 0.00403, $p = 0.941$, 95% CI [-0.0916, 0.144].

Based on findings from educators, anxiety and depression transform into emotional pain that make it difficult for students to concentrate and perform work. Several students exhibited a disinterest and disengagement from schoolwork and their class. Absenteeism was meanwhile often linked to a failure to learn, as students stymied by emotion were absent from school or struggled to keep up with their studies, offsetting rising overall academic attainment.

5.1.3 Coping strategies used by students to deal with domestic violence experiences

The study investigated how students cope with the emotional, psychological, and physical impacts of domestic violence in order to determine adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies. Thirty eight percent of students either talk to friends about their problems, 33% go and engage in hobbies, and 28% go to teachers for help, which indicates the students prefer social support and personal activities for the same. Although almost half of the students (49%) had sought professional counselling, a similar proportion (51%) had not which indicates a lapse in accessing mental health services. After counsel most students experience relief and comfort, 46% feeling emotionally at peace, with 31% feeling hopeful and optimistic about changes for good. When it comes to support systems, 28% of students rely on friends and 26% rely on teachers and counsellors, reflecting the value of both peer and adult support. However, 26% of students felt uncomfortable talking to friends about domestic violence, suggesting that their level of anxiety in discussing such issues. Moreover, students rely on personal strengths like patience, optimism and resilience to cope, as well; 51% noted participating in programs addressing mental health and coping skills, and again most of these, 51%, reported these programs to be 'very helpful'. Mixed support system, both

personal and professional, and the influence of mental health programs in schools can be detrimental in shaping up mental health in children, these findings also highlight.

The educators stressed the effect of domestic violence on students' academic performance. Anxiety and depression created emotional turmoil that made it difficult to focus and complete assignments. Reflections included uninspired attitudes, disengagement from schoolwork, and the absence of connection when a student spoke aloud. Again, absenteeism highly correlated with poor academic performance, with students who have emotional disturbances skipping classes and falling behind in studies and subsequently a decline in the overall academic performance.

5.2 Implications of Findings

This section provides a discussion of theoretical and practical implications of the study findings.

5.2.1 Theoretical implications

This study's findings are consistent with Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which posits that people learn behaviour, attitudes, and emotional responses through observing, imitating, and modelling. The high prevalence of domestic violence against JHS students, especially young females aged 13-15, aligns with the assumption that witnessing violence at home can quickly shape a child's view on what behaviour is acceptable. Many of the students reported seeing their fathers physically attack their mothers, which can create a normalizing effect for such behaviours and make the students more likely to replicate them in their own future relationships. Additionally, students subjected to emotional violence displayed behavioural responses including social withdrawal, aggression, and mood swings—coping behaviours learned from the home. This indicates that domestic violence is not only occurring to children at the

present moment, it carries psychological ramifications leading to how they interact with peers and authority figures. These differences in responses by age group also correspond to stages of cognitive development, where younger children display more emotional reactivity, and older students evidence some desensitization or increased levels of adaptability.

5.2.2 Practical implications

On a practical level, the findings emphasize the need for intervention strategies in schools and communities to help children deal with the effects of domestic violence. Since students experiencing domestic violence have difficulty focusing, display emotional distress, and have a decrease in interest in their studies, counselling services in schools should be focused on mental health. The study found almost half of the students had not sought any professional help, suggesting a potentially significant gap in accessibility or awareness of mental health resources. The priority of schools is to provide targeted interventions to promote help-seeking behaviours, including confidential reporting systems, peer support groups and teacher training programs, in efforts to identify at-risk students and provide them with the support they need.

Again, the findings also highlight the importance of social support systems, as many students turned to friends, teachers and hobbies to cope suggesting the importance of schools creating a supportive and understanding environment where students feel safe expressing their feelings and reaching out for help. Furthermore, since maladaptive coping strategies (e.g., aggression or disengagement) were apparent in some students, incorporating behavioural interventions that target emotional regulation and resilience-building into the curriculum should also be advocated.

The larger implication of these findings is that they underscore the need for community-based interventions and legal structures designed to curb domestic violence, and to shield children from exposure to it. Schools must implement preventive education for families, stricter enforcement of child protection laws and accessible crisis intervention programs initiated by educators, policymakers and social workers to curb child abuse. Such initiatives will also minimize the acute effects of domestic violence on student life and break the cycle of intergenerational violence, thus allowing young people to grow up in a safer and healthier environment.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concludes that the level of domestic violence among selected Junior High School students in Bawjiase suggests a disparity in gender and age in the abuse experienced by students. The youngest female students typically in the 13–15 age categories are exposed to physical and emotional violence due to domestic violence and feeling unsafe in the home. It can be stated that students often feel anxious, have mood swings, experience social withdrawal, and have signs of neglect. Moreover, older students seemed to find coping mechanisms that lessened their perceived threat, but they still face longer-term psychological effects from exposure to violence. The study affirms the need for schools to implement targeted programs to protect and support students experiencing domestic violence.

In relation to the effect of domestic violence on academic performance, the study concludes that though domestic violence did not have meaningful direct impact on students' educational performance, the emotional disturbances and concentrating problems appeared to be widely reported. Anxiety and depression caused students to disengage from their schoolwork, miss classes, and lacked intrinsic motivation, all of

which would indirectly hinder learning momentum. Furthermore, the study affirms that notwithstanding the fact that students attend school, it does not in any way affect the relationship between domestic violence and academic performance. Educational institutions need to stellar recognize that emotional well-being is closely tied to educational success and must provide support systems that attend to the psychological needs of these students.

Based on the coping strategies, it can be concluded that students cope with their experiences and social support, hobbies, and even professional counselling are most often used by students. It should be stated that while the majority of the students turned to professional help, a little beyond half of the students do not suggesting barriers for some students in accessing mental health services. Students also demonstrate reliance on personal strengths like resilience and optimism to face their challenges.

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the conclusions drawn.

1. The Ghana Education Service (GES), in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service, should establish functional child protection desks in all Junior High Schools. These desks should be managed by trained guidance counsellors to provide confidential reporting channels, early identification of abused students and referral to appropriate child protection agencies.
2. The Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service should deploy trained guidance and counselling personnel to all basic schools and provide continuous training in trauma-informed counselling and resilience-based

support. Schools should also integrate routine psychosocial support sessions for students identified as coming from violent homes.

3. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA), under the Ministry of Education, should strengthen life-skills, peace education and child rights content within the basic school curriculum. These lessons should equip students with coping skills, knowledge on where to seek help and healthy conflict management practices.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

This study could be further expanded by increasing the sample size to include a greater diversity among the students of different age groups and coming from different schools. This would ensure that a more detailed understanding of the influence of domestic violence on the academic performances of the students and their well-being is elicited because such a setting would consider most of the experiences and contextual variables. Other specific demographic factors that could be considered include socio-economic status, cultural background, and gender differences, all of which greatly influence how individuals experience and cope with domestic violence. Further, such risk factors are important to understand because they may reveal variation in disparities in exposure and resilience, thus informing targeted interventions.

Qualitative studies involving in-depth interviews among the affected students would yield a more comprehensive insight into their personal experiences and coping strategies. In this regard, qualitative data are bound to explain the complex nature of students' lives by drawing out finer nuances in emotional and psychological ways in which they respond to domestic violence. The deeper this understanding is, the more effective support systems could be offered to meet the specific needs of these students.

It would also be worth investigating how effectively available programs of school-based support and counselling services currently in schools meet the needs of students exposed to domestic violence. Assessing how well programs meet the needs of the students allows researchers to identify deficiencies in service provision and make recommendations for such improvements that would go a long way in strengthening support within educational settings.

Lastly, comparisons between and among different geographic locations in Ghana would add breadth to understand how cultural contexts influence or shape students' experiences and perceptions of domestic violence. Such a comparison can indicate the dissimilarities in societal norms, the legal framework, and/or the level of resources available for informing policy and policymakers, educators on best practices, and innovative strategies that can be undertaken to support students dealing with domestic violence in different settings.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

THE IMPLICATIONS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN BAWJIASE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

To be answered by students

Dear Respondent,

My name is Estherla Quansah from the University of Education, Winneba, Department of Human Rights, Conflict and Peace Studies. I am carrying out a study that requires that you provide information for analysis on your experience regarding domestic violence. I am very grateful that you have taken time to assist in providing questions in that regard. Your perspectives are crucial in understanding how home experiences influence learning and school life. Your candid responses will help deepen our understanding of the issue at hand and inform strategies to assist students affected by domestic violence. Please remember that your participation is completely voluntary, and all responses will remain confidential. I value your willingness to share your insights and experiences.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Part A: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Kindly provide information relating to your demographics below.

1. Age

What is your age?

a. 12-13

b. 14-15

- c. 16-17

2. Gender

What is your gender?

- a. Male
- b. Female

3. Grade Level

What grade are you currently in?

- a. 7th (JHS 1)
- b. 8th (JHS 2)
- c. 9th (JHS 3)

Part B: Extent of Domestic Violence Experienced by Students

Domestic violence is a problem at the front burner of the consequences on students' minds, academic success, and well-being. The study attempts to trace the prevalence and forms of domestic violence that students go through and looks forward to raising awareness about these problems to help design effective intervention and support systems. Please indicate your level of agreement with the statement using the following scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Code	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	I have witnessed physical violence occurring in my home					
2	I have ever been a victim of emotional or psychological violence					
3	I have ever witnessed my father physically abused my mother					

4	I have ever seen a victim of physical violence					
5	I feel unsafe in my home because of conflicts among family members					
6	I have felt threatened or intimidated by someone in my household					
7	Some of my friends and classmates share with me abuses they experience at home.					
8	Domestic violence is a frequent thing in my family.					

Part C: Correlation between Domestic Violence and Academic Achievements

1. Current academic performance (i.e. grade or marks in all subjects)
2. I find it difficult concentrating in school due to lack of peace at home. Please indicate your level of agreement with the statement using the following scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.
3. I believe the incidence of DV in my house affect my academic performance. Please indicate your level of agreement with the statement using the following scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.
4. How would you describe your academic performance since you started experiencing domestic violence?
 - a) Improved
 - b) Remained the same
 - c) Declined

Part D: Coping Strategies Used by Students to Deal with Domestic Violence Experiences

This section looks at identifying effective support mechanisms and resources by understanding the coping mechanisms that the student uses in coping with domestic violence.

1. What strategies do you use to deal with stress related to domestic violence?

- a) Talking to friends
- b) Seeking help from teachers
- c) Engaging in hobbies

2) Have you ever sought help from a counsellor because of domestic violence?

- a) Yes
- b) No

3) If yes, explain how you felt after the counselling.

Social support

4) Who do you turn to for support when dealing with issues of domestic violence?

- a) Friends
- b) Teachers
- c) Family members
- d) Counsellor
- e) Keeping it to myself

5) How comfortable do you feel discussing issues of domestic violence affecting you with your friends?

- a) Not at all comfortable

b) Somewhat comfortable

c) Very comfortable

Resilience factors

6) Mention the personal strengths or qualities that you depend on to cope with challenges of domestic violence.

7) Have you ever participated in any school performance that addressed mental health or coping strategies?

a) Yes

b) No

8) If yes, how beneficial was the program?

a) No beneficial

b) Somewhat beneficial

c) Very beneficial

To be collected from the schools' registers and report cards of students

Part E: School Attendance

Part F: Current Academic Performance

Thank you.

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW GUIDE

THE IMPLICATIONS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN SELECTED JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN BAWJIASE

To be answered by teachers

Dear participants,

My name is Estherla Quansah from the University of Education, Winneba, Centre for Conflict, Human Rights and Peace Studies. I am carrying out a study that requires that you provide information for analysis. This interview guide seeks information on the effects of domestic violence on the academic performance of students in selected Junior High Schools in Bawjiase. Your insights and experiences as educators are vital for understanding how domestic violence can influence students' behaviour, learning, and overall performance in school. The questions aim to collect your observations, opinions, and recommendations on this important issue. Your responses will help provide a clearer understanding of the challenges faced by impacted students and the support systems that could be put in place to assist them in achieving academic success. Thank you for your willingness to share your valuable insights.

Part A: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

1. Age
2. Gender.....
3. Educational Level.....
4. Professional Experience

1. What changes have you observed in academic performance or behaviour of male and female students from homes where domestic violence is suspected compared to those from stable environments?
2. What specific signs do students exhibit that indicate that they are experiencing or witnessing domestic violence?
3. How do these signs affect their academic performance?
4. What support systems does your school have to assist students impacted by domestic violence?
5. How effective are the support systems of your school in enhancing academic success of students experiencing domestic violence?
6. Have you participated in any training focused on recognizing signs of domestic violence in students, and what impact has this training had on your work?
7. How do you collaborate with other school personnel or community agencies to assist students affected by domestic violence, and do you consider these partnerships to be effective?

Thank you for actively participating in the interview.