

THE LANGUAGE USE AND PROPER GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES: A PANACEA FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CONFLICTS RESOLUTION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The recent occurrence in Nigeria as regards to domestic violence which has led many to their early grave and render many children helpless and astray. These account for the incessant social vices amongst the youths in Nigeria. The rate at which this menace is degenerating called for concern among Nigerians especially counsellors, pastors, teachers and researchers in order to find lasting solution to this issue at hand. This ideology on how to curb this menace gave birth to the topic entitled The Language use and proper guidance and counselling services; a panacea for domestic violence and conflict resolution in Nigeria. In the course of carrying out this study it was discovered that so many factors were responsible for domestic violence/conflicts, factors such as poverty, religion, infidelity, lack of understanding, language use and lack of effective communications amongst others. The study recommended that couples/members of the family at all levels should intensify efforts towards tolerating each other, be careful of the kind of language you used on each other and contact a qualified counsellor when necessary in order to curb the negative impacts of domestic violence/conflicts which at time leads to death.

Key words: Language use, guidance and counselling service, panacea, domestic violence, conflicts resolution

Introduction

Domestic violence is a major public health problem in that it affects millions of people and often results in physical and emotional injuries and even deaths. Media reporting of celebrities' such as Nigerian gospel singer Mrs. Osinachi Nwachukwu and many other domestic abuse victims demonstrates that even the most accomplished individuals can be involved in this problem. The statistics about those who are affected by intimate partners violence are staggering; domestic abuse affects 3%-5% of current adult relationships in the United States, among which are over 2 million women (Ugowe, 2022).

Domestic violence is the wilful intimidation, physical assault, battering, sexual assault and other abusive behaviour as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partners against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, and emotional abuse. Domestic violence in Nigeria is said to be on the increase. About 60% of women are said to have been battered by their husbands. Sadly, more educated women (65%) are in this horrible situation as compared to their less educated counterparts (45%). Shockingly, a staggering 87.6% of them do not report the crime to the security Agencies such as Nigeria Police Force and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps. They endure and sometimes die in silence, believing that the law will not protect them (Ugowe, 2022).

Domestic violence has caused so many issues in the life of many Nigerians; separating families and friends. Nigeria has always been a very peaceful nation for a very long time; the question is; where did it all went wrong? Domestic violence is an issue affecting individuals in every community, regardless of age, economic status, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, or nationality. Domestic violence can result in physical injury, psychological trauma, and in severe cases, even death.

Experts link domestic violence to increasing poverty, drug abuse, and use of alcohol, traditional and religious laws which permit men to physically discipline their wife(s), personal dispositions and a raft of other reasons. Only four states of the Federation, including Lagos, have passed laws against the insidious crime, whilst several bills gather dust at the National Assembly. In the states where the law has been passed, it remains to be tested. There is however an urgent need for all the 36 states in Nigeria to put up some laws regarding domestic violence. A lot of victims suffer in silence owing to some factors like fear of divorce, death, shame etc.

Some of this domestic conflicts and violence are caused due to language barriers and lack of proper counselling, as thus necessitated this article. It must be noted that Language plays a key role in curbing domestic conflicts or violence because it is the medium through which communication takes place and without communication there can never be any form of counselling; it's based on this premises that give birth to this study titled the language use and proper counselling; a panacea for domestic conflicts and violence resolution in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Operant Conditioning Theory

American psychologist B. F. Skinner in 1938 propounded the theory of operant conditioning in the United State of America. B. F. Skinner was one of the most influential of American psychologists. A behaviourist, he developed the theory of operant conditioning, the idea that behaviour is determined by its consequences, be they reinforcements or punishments, which

make it more or less likely that the behaviour will occur again. Skinner believed that the only scientific approach to psychology was one that studied behaviours, not internal (subjective) mental processes. Skinner was heavily influenced by the work of John B. Watson as well as early behaviourist pioneers Ivan Pavlov and Edward Thorndike. He spent most of his professional life teaching at Harvard University (after 9 years in the psychology department at Indiana University). He died in 1990 of leukemia, leaving behind his wife, Yvonne Blue and two daughters.

Skinner's theory is based on operant conditioning. The organism is in the process of "operating" on the environment, which in ordinary terms means it is bouncing around its world, doing what it does. During this "operating," the organism encounters a special kind of stimulus, called a reinforcing stimulus, or simply a reinforcer. This special stimulus has the effect of increasing the operant, that is, the behaviour occurring just before the reinforcer. This operant conditioning: "the behaviour is followed by a consequence, and the nature of the consequence modifies the organisms' tendency to repeat the behaviour in the future."

Skinner conducted research on shaping behaviour through positive and negative reinforcement and demonstrated operant conditioning, a behaviour modification technique which he developed in contrast with classical conditioning. His idea of the behaviour modification technique was to put the subject on a program with steps. The steps would be setting goals which would help you determine how the subject would be changed by following the steps. The program design is designing a program that will help the subject to reach the desired state. Then the implementation and evaluation of the program which implies putting the program to use and then evaluating the effectiveness of it will help to get the desired result.

Skinner places a rat in a special cage (called a "Skinner box") that has a bar or pedal on one wall that, when pressed, causes a little mechanism to release a food pellet into the cage. The rat is moving around the cage when it accidentally presses the bar and, as a result of pressing the bar, a food pellet falls into the cage. The operant is the behaviour just prior to the reinforcer, which is the food pellet. In a relatively short period of time the rat "learns" to press the bar whenever it wants food. This leads to one of the principles of operant conditioning a behaviour followed by a reinforcing stimulus results in an increased probability of that behaviour occurring in the future.

If the rat presses the bar and continually does not get food, the behaviour becomes extinguished. This leads to another of the principles of operant conditioning. A behaviour no longer followed by the reinforcing stimulus results in a decreased probability of that behaviour occurring in the future. Now, if you were to turn the pellet machine back on, so that pressing the bar again provides the rat with pellets, the behaviour of bar-pushing will come right back into existence, much more quickly than it took for the rat to learn the behaviour the first time. This is because the return of the reinforcer takes place in the context of a reinforcement history that goes all the way back to the very first time the rat was reinforced for pushing on the bar. This leads to what is called the Schedules of Reinforcement.

Continuous reinforcement is the original scenario: Every time that the rat does the behaviour (such as pedal-pushing), he gets a food pellet. The fixed ratio schedule was the first one Skinner discovered: If the rat presses the pedal three times, say, he gets a goodie. Or five times. Or twenty times. Or "x" times. There is a fixed ratio between behaviours and reinforcers: 3 to 1, 5 to 1, 20 to 1, etc.

The fixed interval schedule uses a timing device of some sort. If the rat presses the bar at least once during a particular stretch of time (say 20 seconds), then he gets a goodie. If he fails to do so, he doesn't get a goodie. But even if he hits that bar a hundred times during that 20 seconds, he still only gets one goodie! One strange thing that happens is that the rats tend to "pace" themselves: They slow down the rate of their behaviour right after the reinforcer, and speed up when the time for it gets close.

A question Skinner had to deal with was how we get to more complex sorts of behaviours. He responded with the idea of shaping, or "the method of successive approximations." Basically, it involves first reinforcing behaviour only vaguely similar to the one desired. Once that is established, you look out for variations that comes a little closer to what you want, and so on, until you have the animal performing a behaviour that would never show up in ordinary life. Skinner and his students have been quite successful in teaching simple animals to do some quite extraordinary things. Beyond fairly simple examples, shaping also accounts for the most complex of behaviours. We are gently shaped by our environment to enjoy certain things.

An aversive stimulus is the opposite of a reinforcing stimulus, something we might find unpleasant or painful. This leads to another principle of operant conditioning. A behaviour followed by an aversive stimulus results in a decreased probability of the behaviour occurring in the future. This both defines an aversive stimulus and describes the form of conditioning known as punishment. If you shock a rat for doing x, it'll do a lot less of x. If you spank Johnny for throwing his toys he will probably throw his toys less and less.

On the other hand, if you remove an already active aversive stimulus after a rat or Johnny performs certain behaviour, you are doing negative reinforcement. If you turn off the electricity when the rat stands on his hind legs, he'll do a lot more standing. If you stop your perpetually nagging when I finally take out the garbage, I'll be more likely to take out the garbage. You could say it "feels so good" when the aversive stimulus stops, that this serves as a reinforcer. Another operant conditioning principle Behaviour followed by the removal of an aversive stimulus results in an increased probability of that behaviour occurring in the future.

Skinner (1938) did not advocate the use of punishment. His main focus was to target behaviour and see that consequences deliver responses. From his research came "shaping" (described above) which is described as creating desirable behaviour by reinforcement. It has been used on all sorts of psychological problems, addictions, neuroses, shyness, autism, even schizophrenia, and works particularly well with children. There are examples of back-ward psychotics who haven't communicated with others for years who have been conditioned to behave themselves in fairly normal ways, such as eating with a knife and fork, taking care of their own hygiene needs, dressing themselves, and so on.

The above theory of operant conditioning propounded by B.F. Skinner can be used to curb the menace of domestic violence, this can be done by making sure that, parents who don't get involved in the acts that lead to domestic violence should be rewarded in order to sustain such behaviour while those parents who are found guilty of any acts of domestic violence/conflicts should be allowed to face stiff punishment in order to discourage such behaviour in our society.

Conceptual Framework

Concepts used in this study are discussed as followed;

Language

Language occupies a unique position in the culture of any group of people (Daniels & Oguche, 2022). While Awoniyi cited in Daniels et al (2022) views language as a mother tongue of a speech community, which an individual acquires in early years and which becomes his instrument of thought and communication. It is widely accepted that the best medium of teaching a child is the mother tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaningful signs that is in the mind of the child that works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which it belongs. Educationally, the child learns more quickly through the mother tongue than the unfamiliar linguistic medium (Fasold in Daniels, 2015).

According to Daniel (2015), language comprises of the human capacity to acquire and use complex systems of communication. Ulbaek further sees language primarily as the mental faculty that allows humans to undertake linguistic behaviour, that is, to learn languages and to produce and understand utterances. This definition stresses the universality of language to all humans and it emphasizes the biological basis for the human capacity for language as a unique development of the human brain.

Domestic Violence/Conflict

Domestic violence is violence committed by someone in the victim's domestic circle. This includes partners and ex-partners, immediate family members, other relatives and family friends. The term 'domestic violence' is used when there is a close relationship between the offender and the victim. There is usually a power gap between them. The victim is dependent on the offender. Domestic violence can take the form of physical, sexual or psychological abuse. According to Benson-Eluwa (2017), domestic Violence (closely related to domestic abuse, spousal abuse, battering, family violence and intimate partner violence) is a pattern of behaviour which involves violence or other abuse by one person against another in a domestic context, such as in marriage or cohabitation. As noted by Ezeocha and Mojaye (2011) "around the world at least one woman in every three has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her life time".

Domestic violence often occurs because the perpetrator believes that abuse is justified and acceptable. Awareness, perception, definition and documentation of domestic violence differ widely from country to country. There may be a period of abuse during which tensions rise and an act of violence is committed, followed by a period of reconciliation and calm. Victims of domestic violence may be trapped in such domestic violent situations through fear, isolation, shame, insufficient financial resources, or simply to protect children. As a result of abuse, victims may experience physical disabilities, chronic health problems, mental illness, limited finances, and poor ability to create healthy relationships. Children who live in a household with violence may continue the legacy of abuse when they reach adulthood. In the words of Kehinde (2010) who noted that over half of Nigerian women are subjected to domestic violence in their homes. Domestic violence affects all social groups and can consist of physical, sexual and psychological abuse. Although men can also be affected by domestic violence, women suffer disproportionately.

This trend occurs across much of the world, but Nigeria's discriminatory laws and dismissive police compound its particularly high rates of domestic violence. Most potently, its prevalent culture of silence and stigma for the victims of domestic violence hinders public acknowledgement of the problem. There exists an urgent need to challenge the social prejudices and institutional structures in order for Nigeria to protect her women, not just from

danger, but also from ridicule, fear and isolation. On a daily basis, Nigerian women are beaten, raped and even murdered by members of their family for supposed transgressions, which can range from not having meals ready on time, to visiting family members without their husband's permission.

Nelson and Brown (2011) confirms this when they assert that some states in Nigeria has "become infamous for atrocious practices against children". According to Nelson et al (2011), in many communities "children are accused of bewitching their parents and family members and have consequently been evicted, tortured and some even murdered either by their parents or prophets." Although more widespread in South Asia, acid attacks on women which cause extreme pain, disfigurement and fatality, have also been on the increase in Nigeria in recent times.

Oyeshola (2005) asserts that a combination of factors contribute to the high rates of domestic violence in Nigeria. In general, domestic violence is seen as a 'private' matter to be dealt with by the family, typically a domain of male authority. Nigerian women are expected to behave with subservience to their husbands, and domestic violence is often accepted as part of marriage. According to Amnesty International, many Nigerians expect a woman to endure whatever she meets in her matrimonial home and to provide sex and obedience to her husband. Some victims even see domestic violence as a sign of love. Domestic violence in Nigeria is often viewed as a necessary corrective tool for women, at best a part and parcel of married life. Robinson (2009) lists many factors that help to perpetuate domestic violence. These include:

- i. The inability of many women to escape violence and domination due to their disadvantaged economic status. Many women and girls depend on the financial resources of their husband, father or families. This forces them to put up with domination for fear of the withdrawal of such financial support.
- ii. A culture of silence that stigmatises the victims of domestic violence rather than the perpetrators.
- iii. Many Nigerians have little faith in the integrity or capacity of the police to redress crimes of domestic abuse. Sometimes, when complaints are brought to the police by victims of domestic violence, they are told to go home and be good housewives. In other words, to return home and remain subservient to their husbands.
- iv. Discriminatory national laws that pose serious threats to women's safety. The penal code in northern Nigeria permits the use of any means to correct a child, pupil, servant or wife as long as it does not amount to grievous harm (Section 55). In like manners, marital rape is excluded from the definition of rape under Sharia penal code in northern Nigeria and under the criminal code in southern Nigeria.

In Nigeria today it's hardly to find any relationship that is free from conflicts, and this conflicts at home often lead to domestic violence. Domestic violence is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into our society and effort to remedy this menace prove abortive due to our perspective, religion, traditional believe and many more. They are a saying that you can be doing the same thing over and over again and expect different result. In cases such as these, it is advisable that the party involved in this menace should employ language use and proper counselling as a panacea to the problem. Reasoning through dialogue could be used to bring children or parents to "see reason(s)" with their selves at home and hopefully "fall in line". But when language is used authoritatively like in a military barracks, the other partner would feel that their fundamental human rights are being scuttled and as such, would revolt so seriously that the conflict situation may appear unsolvable or lead to loss of life.

Domestic violence (DV) also called dating violence, intimate partner abuse, spousal abuse, intimate partner violence (IPV), and domestic abuse takes many forms. Maltreatment that takes place in the context of any romantic relationship is abuse as described by the above specific terms. It, therefore, affects men, women, or teen girls and boys, whether in a married or unmarried heterosexual or homosexual relationship. Intimate partner violence may consist of one or more forms, including emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, or economic abuse, and is defined as one person in an intimate relationship using any means to put down or otherwise control the other.

Causes of Domestic Violence/Conflicts

Although there is no specific cause for domestic violence, women at the highest risk for being the victim of domestic violence include those with male partners who abuse drugs (especially alcohol), are unemployed or underemployed, afflicted by poverty, have not graduated from high school, and are or have been in a romantic relationship with the victim. Unmarried individuals in heterosexual relationships tend to be more at risk of becoming victims of intimate partner abuse. A mindset that gives men power over women puts individuals at risk of becoming involved in an abusive relationship, either as a perpetrator or as a victim.

Generally, the domestic violence has been identified as an overwhelming factor affecting children in Nigeria. It would appear, then that, domestic violence may present a very serious danger to the emotional, personality and mental adjustment of the young adolescent and this impinges on the family wellbeing. The tragedy of marriages in all ramifications is domestic violence. There are many causes of domestic violence, but let's take look at the most prominent causes of the menace. Karin (2011) identified the following as the causes of Domestic Violence (broken homes):

- i. **Lack of Time Management:** As the saying goes, "proper preparation prevents poor performance", a lot of people find it difficult to mark out a good schedule of their daily activities thereby neglecting their home at the expense of their work. One can't imagine homes that care less about their kids just because the pillar of the house is too busy. Everyone is busy but the ability to map out a good time to cater for the children makes a perfect home while the inability to map out time to cater for the family leads to broken home.
- ii. **Strange Partners:** In the home, some partners are very secretive in their attitude and ways of life. They smile when you expected them to react to something you know that hurts them. They never share their feelings about any issue with their partners. Some may even go to the extent of over monitoring the schedule of their partners. This shows the lack of trust and confidence as thus causes marital instability which in turn leads to domestic violence.
- iii. **Slavery Mind-set:** The word "help-meet" in the home is fast losing its meaning as most people are now over-conscious of the meaning of this word. Some spouse sees their partner as a slave putting all duties, especially house chores on them. There is no evil if a man decides to cook dinner for his family and there is no evil if a woman should pay the bills of the family if she has the means but over-consciousness of being called a fool is affecting the mentality of most people.
- iv. **Over-Reaction:** Humans are not perfect and are bound to make mistake. Over reaction to this mistakes may sometimes determine the lifespan of the relationship or marriage. Some people over react irrationally to some issues that need to be settled amicably when the man is angry, what is expected of the wife is to be quiet and vice versa because two mad person cannot build a home.

- v. **Multi-Party Peacemaker:** Advise from friends or close relatives often leads to domestic violence. Since there are bound to be a disagreement in the home, the best thing to do is to settle it amicably in the four corners of the house and not calling on outsiders or members of the extended family to come and settle it for you being the couples because it will not always work out that way at times. Their contributions might worsen or escalate the issue at hand.
- vi. **Finances:** Money or lack of it is one of the leading causes of domestic violence. Inability to pay bills makes partners snap at each other. Also, spending money without your spouse knowing causes resentment and anger. This is true if you cannot pay your bills or debts due to excess in spending.
- vii. **Sexual Unfaithfulness:** According to the definition of marriage “marriage is the union between a man and a woman to become one flesh. Since it is marriage that joined them together, it will be wrong for either of them to refuse to submit to each other. Denial of sex by any of the couple might lead the other to look for it somewhere else. Sadly enough, cheating is prevalent among married couples. It is estimated that infidelity has occurred in nearly eighty percent (80%) of all marriages (Iyeh & Ogwuche, 2017). This percentage according to them is higher than earlier years, mostly due to the internet; it is no longer hard to find someone to have an affair within the cyberspace. The devastation, heartbreak and loss of trust are difficult obstacles to overcome once a spouse has cheated. Infidelity often leads to marriage separation and ultimately divorce which will give birth to broken home and which effect is not palatable for the children therein because it tends to affect them academically.
- viii. **Language Use and Lack of Effective Communication:** A married couple is a team and to be a successful team there must be moderate use of language and effective communication. Lack of effective communication is a big factor that leads to marriage separation. There may be communication but how effective is it? Without effective communication, expectations such as likes, dislikes and dreams will all go unsaid. It is difficult for a marriage to flourish if you or your partner feels unsatisfied. If something is bothering you, speak up and when your partner voices his or her concerns listen and figure out a plan of action together.
- ix. **Parents’ Divorce:** In anytime, anywhere and anyhow, divorce is not healthy for the family life. But it happens. Divorce is claimed to be the main reason behind broken homes. The common disputes between a husband and a wife are the financial issue, sexual misunderstanding, early marriage, teen pregnancy, education, health problem, etc. When the parents get divorced, usually either of them or sometime both of them leave home. Then the absence of either or both the parents will affect the family administration, then the family becomes broken (Goswamee, 2008).
- x. Divorce is the hardest challenge that can happen to a couple especially if they have kids. It is painful for the husband and wife to finally end their marriage but they are two matured individuals who are strong enough to handle changes in their lives. The impact of this turn of events in a family’s life is more devastating on the children. Not only that, divorce is painful for them on that moment to hear the news that their parents are getting a divorce. The worst that can happen is the long term effect that can eventually ruin their future (Abubakar, 2015). Going through a divorce is a very difficult situation to be in; usually their children are the ones who always suffer. An argument of the parents is one of the basic causes of broken families. Money is mostly the cause of the basic conflict of a couple arguments. Too much money in a person's mind can cause greediness; this will let the person forget about love towards his/her partner.
- xi. **Death:** It is obvious that death reduces the family strength. More adversely death sometime leads to broken family. Like other reason all death in the family do not

necessarily bring any broken, but by the death of mother or father children become mother/father less. When children realize that the parent will never return, they get emotionally disturbed. Moreover, if the left partner live a drastic life in search of happiness after losing his/her partner, the results in the family could not be hale and hearty for the family life, then it starts to be broken. In early life, loss of mother is more damaging than loss of the father. The mother plays a very important role in nurturing the child during the formative years of life. But as the children grow older, loss of the father is often more serious than loss of the mother, especially for boys. Sometimes, the mother may lack the time and energy to give children the care they need as she has double burden of homemaking and bread-earning. But if children loss both parents, the effects are doubly serious.

The home as a nucleus of the society, it is important to note that, the treatment given to the child at home before and during the school years has marked effects on his personality and his academic performance in school. It however, obvious that every home has its own peculiar way of life which is neither totally good nor bad, but leaves a unique impression on the child. The first basic influence on a child in terms of interest and motivation begins from home (Johnson, 2008).

Types of Domestic Violence

The various types of domestic violence include physical, verbal (also called emotional, mental, or psychological abuse), sexual, economic/financial, and spiritual abuse. Stalking and cyber-stalking are also forms of intimate partner abuse.

- i. Physically abusive behaviors include assault of any kind, ranging from:
 - Pinching
 - Pushing
 - Hitting or slapping
 - Choking
 - Shooting
 - Stabbing
 - Murder
- ii. Verbal, emotional, mental, or psychological violence is described as using words to criticize, demean, or otherwise decrease the confidence of the wife, husband, or other intimate partner victims.
- iii. Sexual abuse refers to any behavior that uses sex to control or demean the victim, like intimidating the victim into engaging in unsafe sex or sexual practices in which he or she does not want to participate.
- iv. Economic or financial abuse is described as threatening or otherwise limiting the victim's financial freedom or security.
- v. Spiritual abusers either force the victim to participate in the batterer's religious practices instead of their own or to raise mutual children in a religion that the victim is not in favor of.
- vi. Stalking refers to repeatedly harassing and threatening behavior, including showing up at the victim's home or workplace, placing harassing phone calls, voicemail, email, or postal mail messages, leaving unwanted items, or vandalizing the victim's property. It is usually committed by perpetrators of other forms of domestic violence.

Effects of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a major public health problem in that it affects millions of people and often results in physical and emotional injuries and even deaths. Media reporting of celebrities' domestic violence victimization demonstrates that even the most accomplished individuals can be involved in this problem. The statistics about those who are affected by intimate partner violence are staggering; domestic abuse affects 5%-10% of homes in Nigeria today, including more than 2 million women.

The members of each family constitute the child's first environment and are the most significant people during the early years of his/her life. The kind of family in which the children grow up affects their development by determining the kind of relationship they share with different family members. Home provides children with feelings of security and stability. These are essential for personal and social adjustment. Anything that interferes with these feelings can be regarded as hazardous for children. Hazardous relationships involve all family members and the possibility of a domestic violence becomes greater

Children are the ones who suffer most in any family where there is a domestic violence; the immediate effect has been shot upon them. When a couple split up, it is the children that are greatly affected scarring them physically, emotionally and socially. Children are supposed to grow up in a healthy family where they could receive love, care and concern from their parents. However in the broken family, from where children would get such love and care? It is, therefore, children from broken homes that are normally growing up with having low and bad manner. Children who make problem, rivalry and discontentment in the school or other gathering places are usually from the broken families. Most of the children admitted in the Remand home, or other social centres due to some serious mistakes are brought up from broken family where there is no proper administration and proper living standard. A broken family is followed by financial problems generally. That is why; there are more tendencies for children to do stealing and robbing.

Domestic violence (broken home) is a difficult situation to be in. Other people are only concerned about what is happening to the parents, without knowing it has greater effects to the child, the child ends up with the greatest amount of problems. These may not be obvious at first they might not show up right away. Divorce may bring a lot of negative impacts to the life of the child. It may bring negative effects on the psychological and social aspects of the child's life (Ibrahim, 2015).

Slowed academic development is another common way that domestic violence affects children. The emotional stress alone can be enough to stunt child's academic progress, but the lifestyle changes and instability of a broken family can contribute to poor educational outcomes. This poor academic progress can stem from a number of factors, including instability in the home environment, inadequate financial resources and inconsistent routines (Iyeh, 2017).

Domestic violence affects children's social relationships in several ways. First, some children act out their distress about their broken family by acting aggressive and by engaging in bullying behaviour, both of which can negatively affect peer relationships. Other children may experience anxiety, which can make it difficult for them to seek positive social interactions and engage in developmentally beneficial activities such as teen sports. Teens from broken families might develop a cynical attitude toward relationships and harbor feelings of mistrust, both toward their parents and potential romantic partners (Kale, 2008). By its very nature, domestic violence changes not only the structure of the family but also its

dynamics. Even if you and your spouse have an amicable divorce, simply creating two new households permanently alters family interactions and roles. Based on the new living arrangements, your children may need to perform more chores and assume additional roles in the new household's basic functioning.

Children may experience behaviour problems at school with teachers, acting out against peers, and generally not wanting to cooperate with any assignments or instructions, and they also may have difficulties concentrating and understanding assignments. Children might lean toward the negative side to peer pressure. At home, children may act out against siblings, their biological parent and a possible stepparent. It was found that adolescents had fewer behaviour problems if there is a positive relationship not only with biological parents, but if stepparents are involved, specially a strong relationship with stepfathers (Omogwu, 2017).

It must be understood that, the treatment given to the child at home before and during the school years, has marked effects on his or her social life and academic performance. It is obvious according to Abubakar (2015) that every home has its own values that leave a unique impression on the child. Experience has shown that warmth of the home is the most important factor in promoting all forms of adjustment in people especially in school children. It is also good to note that most crucial period for the development of independence in children occurs when parents (the family) begins to impose regulations and demands.

Olson in Burabari (2017) spoke of three contacts between the home (parents) and their children. These include freedom and responsibility, loyalty and commitment, and achievement and support. In the home parents give their children freedom to a degree that the children show responsibility and this makes the children feel confident in their activities right there at home which they later carry to the school environment. Okafor in Sunday (2016) says human beings must not only grow physically but mentally, emotionally and spiritually so that the task of parents will naturally cut-out for them. Hence, the home acquires by nature an inherent right and duty to educate the child. The education of the child will be more lucrative and enduring in a healthy home than broken ones. The home that provides an inviting educating environment must be a motivating agent in the child educational pursuit.

Orthungur in Okafor (2016), stated that a good home prepares good candidates for the school and the society at large, while a broken home feeds the school and the society with problematic members. Therefore, factors emanating from home or teaching by parents have great influence on the child. If these influences are positive, they turn out a good pupils-student and tend to perform excellently in their academic pursuit but if they are negative, they can make the child unfit for both the school and the society at large as such individuals end up being misfits or social deviants. Omogwu (2017) and Okorodudu (2018) seemed to support the above view by Orthungur, when he asserted that parents and other adult of the family must know that children learn a lot before, they actually begin schooling; they should therefore assume proper responsibility for helping the children to have proper experiences and acquire the skills appropriate for their age.

Johnson (2012) had similar view. According to him, children from poor and culturally deprived families, homes, and neighbourhoods have high risks of school failure. It must be noted that some affluent both broken homes and or strife ridden homes have more harmful effects upon children than homes that is poor in material wealth, but very rich in love, respect for one another, peace, happiness, joy, unity, honesty and so many more. Such humble homes tend to bring up a child who in turn will contribute positively to the family and the society at large.

Possible Solutions to the Menace of Domestic Violence or Conflicts

The following are some of the possible solutions to domestic violence:

- i. **Provision of Guidance and Counselling Services:** Both abusers and victims of domestic violence need psychological treatment by a professionally trained counselor, psychologist and/or religious leaders separately or individually. Religious institutions should have a viable counseling unit since in this part of the world; religion plays a significant role in people's lives.
- ii. **Language use and Communication:** Language and communication can be through verbal, non-verbal or written media. What defines humanity is language which is the vehicle of communication. Language is regarded as the key to the heart of a people. Language and communication, therefore, are very crucial in the management and resolution of domestic violence. Communication is inherently a social process. Whether one communicates face to face with a single person or with a group of people through the mass media, it is still a social activity involving two or more people. By analyzing the communication process, one discovers that it is a chain made up of identifiable links. According to Robbins and Judge (2008), before communication can take place, a purpose expressed as a message to be conveyed, is needed. It passes between a sender and a receiver. The message is encoded (converted to a symbolic form) and passed by way of some medium (channel) to the receiver, who retranslates (decodes) the message initiated by the sender.

Polite language, if institutionalized in homes as a means of curbing domestic conflicts, can be transferred into the wider society. When this is done, it would not be difficult for members of a society to say "I am sorry", "forgive me" or other such forms and because a soft answer turns away wrath, conflicts in the society would reduce. This way, polite language will replace those verbal uses that put down, hurt and cause pain, eventually leading to conflict. This is because language is an instrument of alienation as well as integration. Language does not always precipitate conflicts, but its use or misuse does because language is not an end in itself but a means to an end. Language is the golden egg-layer in the resolution of domestic conflicts because domestic conflicts usually occur when language used during intimate or causal communication is not good enough.

- iii. **Total abstinence from alcohol and drugs –** Alcohol could contribute to violent behaviour. Where this is the case, the abuser should reduce, or better still, stop the consumption of alcohol or drugs completely.
- iv. **Instill Discipline at Home –** Parents, teachers and guardians need to learn about how best to discipline a child. There is a thin line between discipline and abuse and unfortunately, this line is crossed most of the time. Everyone who interacts with children in one way or the other is encouraged to read books on how to properly discipline a child so that in an attempt to discipline the child, we would not be teaching the child violence as a way of responding to disobedience. Our children watch how we treat relatives and house helps. They see how we violate them. Yes, spare the rod and spoil the child doesn't always translate to abusing the child. A child has rights too. The same way a spouse should not act like they own the other spouse, this is the same way that parents need to stop playing God over their child. They do not own the child. Let's get it right.
- v. **Victims of Domestic Violence Should Start Speaking Out –** instead of dying in silence, is advisable the victim should speak out in order for such problem to be

eradicated or brought to the barest minimum. Domestic violence has no respect for gender, location, religion or status, the saddest thing is that where a man is abused in the home, many don't believe it. He is expected to be a man and not feel pain. A man who admits to being a victim perceived as being less of a man, a weakling. This unrealistic expectation of the society about men, in addition to men being repressive in nature, makes it quite difficult to estimate the percentage of men in domestic violence situations. Many remain and lose their lives or die internally. There is no support system for men. There is no knowledge of what constitutes violence to a man. Domestic violence to a man may not always be physical assault. It may take the form of when a wife harasses a man to a point where life becomes unbearable for him, denies him of food or sex for long periods, belittles him in the eyes of society etc. This is emotional abuse and is a form of domestic violence as it kills the man on the inside.

Conclusion

Language is an important regulator of individual consciousness and social control. It therefore means that language reflects the minds of individuals. It is a viable instrument of expression and communication while guidance and counselling is a road map for domestic violence resolution.

This study has examined the ways in which language use and proper guidance and counselling can be used to solve domestic violence. Family is said to be the first institution where one starts to equip oneself to grow. Differences have been found in each family, having a healthy and happy family is everyone's dream. But many families could not achieve it due to different problems; some of the healthy families have been broken up as a result of domestic violence. When unwanted things like misunderstanding, lack of trust, infidelity and poor communication between both couples are coming up, it should be treated or settled amicably because this has led many families been broken, and the members are separated. This is a tragic happening out of unrestricted reasons as well as unfortunate reasons.

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