

**PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS ON THE IMPACT OF COUNSELLING IN THE  
REDUCTION OF HOME VIOLENCE AGAINST FEMALE PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS  
IN MBAITOLI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, IMO STATE**

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**Abstract**

*This study was on perception of primary school teachers on the impact of counselling in the reduction of home violence against female primary school pupils. It was conducted in Mbaitoli Local Government Area of Imo State in the South Eastern part of Nigeria. Four research questions were formulated to aid in eliciting information. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire structured in a four point Likert format containing 19 items. The research design adopted for the study was a survey design. Two hundred and fifty teachers from all the government primary schools in Mbaitoli were selected as sample for the study through a simple random sampling technique involving balloting. The instruments were analysed in tables using mean statistics. Findings showed that home violence exists in many homes against female primary school pupils and that counselling plays significant role in minimizing the level of home violence against female children.*

**Keywords: Perception, Counselling, Reduction, Home violence, Primary school pupils.**

**Introduction**

In recent times, home violence against the female pupils has been on the increase. Female children of primary school ages have been maltreated and placed under severe punishment for little mistakes or misdeeds that may require mild correction. This wicked act is mostly perpetrated by some wicked parents, caregivers, step parents, etc. Every effort made to combat this ugly phenomenon has proved abortive.

According to Ezeala (2012), home violence or what is popularly known as domestic violence is a pattern of behavior involving violence or harsh treatment by a person against the other in a home or domestic setting. United Nation (UN) (1993) defined domestic violence as physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation. Ugoh and Okara (2010) opined that usually, the victims of

home violence are the women and children, but the most vulnerable to the act are girls of primary school ages. This occurs when the perpetrators believe that the violence or treatment is welcomed, justified or unlikely to be reported.

Home violence vary in forms and degrees, the forms can be categorized into six namely, physical, verbal, emotional, economic, religious and sexual abuses. The degree at which these acts are perpetrated is overwhelming. For example, most girls/pupils are forced into street trading at the expense of their schooling, they are made to hawk and carry big wares on their heads, trek kilometers to fetch water from the streams or fire woods from the bushes. Some are forced into sexual intercourse and suffer in silence, still others are terribly beaten and whipped, starved and locked out of the house in the lonely night and in most cases, they are beaten to coma.

The reasons why these pupils especially the girls suffer these are unfathomable and flimsy. However, the culprits in some occasions, claim that the acts are done for the purpose of disciplining the child, teaching her to be diligent and industrious, etc. Whatever the defence is, home violence against females of primary school ages in particular is bad and should not be condoned. According to Awake (2013), when children are treated violently, they grow up traumatized.

Primary school is the least but fundamental educational level catering for children aged 6-11 years or above. It is the stage at which children are taught their rights and wrongs and have their characters shaped or marred. Many talents are uncovered and tapped at this level. According to Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) (2014), primary education is the key to the success or failure of the other systems of education. It is the stage at which the sound basis for the child's survival is laid. Any deviation from the primary objectives of education at this level affects the overall development of the child. Children at the primary school level are called pupils, they are fragile and manifest certain characteristics that are fractious hence, handling them in most cases require keen understanding and patience.

Sadly to Azeez (2015) many caregivers including biological parents, foster parents, step-parents and guardians have unregrettably used the child's weakness against her. In some homes, the girls are forced into sales girls, house slaves and sex mates. Many are frequently sent on errands under heavy rain and thunder storm and under scorching sun, any objection to this ungodly act by the female child is seen as betrayal and disobedience at highest order hence the child is placed under severe punishment including kneeling under a scorching sun or rain for hours, whipping, going to bed on empty stomach, eating late in the night and in most cases sleeping outside especially in cold weather. In other times, they are forced to run certain errand to the full before they are allowed to eat and sleep such as filling all the water containers, washing all plates and dishes, etc. As a result of this violent acts meted on these innocent primary school pupils precisely the girls, many have taken the classroom as their bedrooms. Some have lost their trust on significant others while others suffer emotional trauma culminating to low academic performance, dropout of school, unwanted pregnancy and more.

Undoubtedly, several bye-laws and policies had been enacted to ensure the protection of children especially the girls against home violence and other related disgusting treatment.

The impact of these laws are not fully felt either because the law enforcement agents refused to implement them to the full, or the victims of home violence conceal their identities and are not willing to bring their culprits to book. As a result, the menace continues to increase.

Interestingly, the impact of counselling in reducing these un-cultural and unscriptural practices against the female school pupils cannot be hyperbolized. Counselling is a powerful tool generally used to modify unacceptable behaviours, it is efficacious in changing maladaptive behaviours to normalcy. Home violence against primary school pupils will drastically reduce it.

According to Shertzer and Stone (1976), cited in Ugwuegbulam, Ukoha, Okezie and Duru (2021), counselling is a learning process in which individuals learn about themselves, their interpersonal relations, and behaviours that advance their personal development. Nwachukwu (1996) in Onyemerekeya and Ugwuegbulam (2014) defined counselling as a relationship between a professionally trained, competent counsellor and an individual seeking help in gaining greater self-understanding and improved decision making and behaviour changing skills for problem resolution and development growth.

Similarly, Okafor, Oparah and Ugwuadu (2018) opined that counselling is a personal help carried out mainly by means of inter-personal communication whereby the counsellor helps the counsellee in achieving adaptive attitude, insight and behaviours. The aim of counselling is to enhance inter personal development by adjusting one's way of life to corresponding to the generally acceptable way of living.

This work therefore will x-rayed the opinions or perspectives of teachers on how effective counselling is in reducing the abnormality of home violence against female primary school pupils.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The rate of home violence against female children of primary school ages has been on the high increase. Female children are experiencing varieties of harsh treatment by their supposed to be parents, senior siblings and guardians. Some have ran away from their homes because they could not bear the pains and agony which they went through in the hands of their significant others. The researchers have the teachers in mind who feel that lack of appropriate counselling has led to an increase of home violence against female primary school pupils in Imo State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The primary objective of this study was to ascertain the perceptions of teachers on the impact of counselling in the reduction of home violence against female primary school pupils. Specifically, the study endeavoured to find out the followings:

- Aspects/ forms of home violence against female children. Reasons for home violence against female primary school children
- Those mostly culpable of home violence against female children of primary school age.
- Ways counselling have intervened in the reduction of home violence against female children of primary school age.

## **Research Questions**

The following questions guided the study:

- To what extent do forms of home violence negatively affect female children of primary school age?
- Why are female children of primary school age treated violently in the homes?
- Who are mostly responsible for home violence against female children of primary school age?
- To what extent have counselling services helped to reduce home violence against females of primary school age?

## **Methodology**

To ascertain the perception of teachers on the impact of counselling in the reduction of home violence against primary school pupils, the researchers adopted a survey approach design. This method gave room for the opinions and perceptions of respondents on the issue under investigation. It also allowed for a questionnaire to be used as an instrument for data collection.

Out of the 426 teachers in Mbaitoli Local Government Area, the opinions of 250 teachers were sampled using simple random sampling techniques involving balloting by writing the names of the teachers in the Local Government Area and picking from the pool. This technique was adopted to enable all the respondents have the chance of being selected.

The researchers used a nineteen item questionnaire structured in a four point modified Likert scale format to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire was developed from the research questions and it is tagged "Impact of Counselling in the Reduction of Home Violence Against Female Children Questionnaire (ICRHVAFCQ)".

To ensure the content and face validity of the instrument, the instrument was constructed after a careful review of professional literature on the perception of teachers on the impact of counselling in the reduction of home violence against female primary school pupils. Thereafter, a draft copy was given to two experts in measurement and evaluation and another in counseling psychology to assess the suitability of the instrument. Their professional suggestions were integrated into the final copy before administration was made.

The data collected were analysed with mean statistics. The criterion measure of 2.50 was used. The items that had mean scores of 2.50 and above were accepted while those that had a mean score below 2.50 were rejected.

## **Data Analysis and Results**

**Research Question 1:** To what extent do the forms of home violence negatively affect female children of primary school age?

**Table 1: Mean ratings on the form of home violence meted against female children of primary school ages**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	X	Decision
1	Female children of primary school age are sexually abused in their homes	94 376	83 249	37 74	36 36	250 735	2.9	Accepted
2.	Primary school female pupils suffer physical abuse in their home such as hard beating	101 404	66 198	51 102	32 32	250 736	2.9	Accepted
3.	Primary school female pupils in most homes are emotionally abused by being denied of basic right such as self expression, education, etc	97 388	111 333	33 66	9 9	250 796	3.1	Accepted
4.	Female children of primary school age are verbally abused through name callings, curses etc in their homes	123 492	101 303	14 28	12 12	250 835	3.3	Accepted
5	Parents usually abuse their primary age female children economically by starving them and denying them basic needs of life e.g clothing and food	86 344	114 342	32 64	18 18	250 768	3.0	Accepted
<b>Grand Mean</b>							3.0	

**Decision range:** Mean score of 2.50 and above are accepted, whereas any mean below 2.50 is rejected.

Analysis in table one above indicated a grand mean of 3.0 that signified that all the enumerated forms of violence are perpetrated to a great extent in the homes against female children of primary school ages.

**Research Question 2:** Why are female children of primary school age treated violently in the home?

**Table Two: Mean rating on why female children are violently treated in their homes**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	X	Decision
6	Violent acts against female children are perceived as a form of training	91 364	96 288	42 84	21 21	250 757	3.0	Accepted
7.	Parents who are violent against their female children do so to correct the children's mistakes	121 484	87 261	29 58	13 13	250 816	3.2	Accepted
8.	Violent acts shown to female children in their homes are meant to instill the spirit of industry in them	132 528	67 201	19 28	32 32	250 799	3.1	Accepted
9.	Some cultural beliefs allow for the violent treatment against the female children as they are inferior to the boys	151 504	72 216	16 32	11 32	250 863	3.4	Accepted
<b>Grand Mean</b>							3.2	

Table 2 above showed a grand mean of 3.2 which falls within the range of great extent, signifying that violent acts on female children of primary school age in their homes are either perceived as strategies for instilling morals and diligence in them or culturally influenced.

**Research Question 3:** Who are mostly responsible for home violence against female children of primary school age?

**Table Three:** Mean rating on those mostly culpable of home violence against female children of primary school age

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	X	Decision
10	Fathers are more culpable of home violence against female children	31 124	47 141	74 148	98 98	250 511	2.0	Rejected
11	Mothers are more guilty of home violence against female children	69 276	88 264	46 92	47 47	250 679	2.7	Rejected
12	Older siblings show more wicked tendency against female children in their homes	23 92	51 153	86 172	90 90	250 507	2.0	Rejected
13	Foster parents such as step mothers /fathers, uncle and other relatives are responsible for home violence against female children	125 500	97 291	11 22	17 17	250 830	3.3	Accepted
14	Culture is responsible for violent acts against female children	96 384	74 222	52 104	28 28	250 738	2.9	Accepted
Grand Mean							2.6	

From the analysis in table 3 above, it showed a grand mean of 2.6. The grand mean is greater than the accepted mean of 2.5 showing that all the categories of people mentioned in the table are culpable of home violence against female children except fathers and older siblings whose mean score are 2.0 and 2.0 respectively.

**Research Question 4:** To what extent have counselling services helped to reduce home violence against female children of primary school age?

**Table Four:** Mean rating on the extent to which counselling services have helped to reduce home violence against female children of primary school age

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	X	Decision
15	Counselling discourages home violence in its entirety	125 500	79 237	19 38	27 27	250 802	3.2	Accepted
16	Parents and guardians are exposed to the dangers of home violence against female children	116 464	101 303	12 24	21 21	250 812	3.2	Accepted
17	Counselling has helped parents to accept better alternatives in the moral upbringing of their female children other than being violent to them.	131 384	129 129	18 36	7 7	250 812	3.2	Accepted

18	Counselling has helped to shape some cultural beliefs that are not female child friendly such as female genital mutilation	92 368	88 264	26 52	44 44	250 728	2.9	Accepted
19	Counselling has reduced the level of child marriage	89 356	104 312	31 62	26 26	250 756	3.0	Accepted
<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>3.1</b>		

Table 4 examined the extent to which counselling services have helped to reduce the level of home violence against female children. Analysis in the table indicated a grand mean of 3.1. The grand mean of 3.1 signifies that counseling services have to a considerable extent reduced the level of home violence against female children.

### Discussion of Findings

The study found that violence against female primary school pupils exists in the homes. The result of the study indicated various ways and manners by which the female pupils are abused ranging from sexual, physical, emotional, verbal and economic violence. The forms differ just as family, religion, ethnic group and culture differ. The findings also agreed with UN (1993) that home or domestic violence varies in forms and takes the kinds of physical, sexual and psychological.

The study also showed that violence against female primary school pupils is considered a way of training and correction. Whereas, in some places the treatment is adjudged normal and culturally justifiable in other areas it is considered abnormal. The reason for this is due to the wide believe that girls are inferior to their boys counterparts even as they are expected to be industrious and well-behaved so as to win the love and heart of a responsible man. Other findings made from the study depicted that mothers, stepmothers/fathers, uncles and other relatives are guiltier of violent acts against female children (Azeez, 2015).

It was also revealed that counselling exerts great positive influence in minimizing or obliterating the rate of home violence against female children of primary school age. The finding is in consonance with Shertzer and Stone (1976), Onyemerekeya and Ugwuegbulem (2014) and Okafor et al (2018) who respectively held that counselling impacts in its recipients the ability to make informed decision, alter maladaptive behaviours and achieve adaptive behaviours.

### Conclusion

The study copiously examined the perception of primary school teachers on the impact of counselling in the reduction of home violence against female primary school pupils. It was conducted in Mbaitoli Local Government Area of Imo State in the South Eastern part of Nigeria. Findings from the analysis showed that home violence exists in many homes against female primary school pupils and that counselling is playing significant roles in minimizing the level of home violence against female children of primary school age.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings revealed from the study, the researchers recommend that more awareness should be created on the roles of counsellors in modifying maladaptive

behavioural tendencies in the society such as home violence. Parents, pupils and teachers should be encouraged to unveil their worries to the counsellors for proper modification of conducts.

It is also recommended that guidance counsellors be posted to all primary schools to assist in curbing the academic, social and personality worries of the pupils. We also suggest that other researchers should extend the study to other local government areas within and outside the State.

Teachers and counselors should endeavour to visit the children in their homes. This will create positive home-school relationships and increase the adjustment levels of the pupils both at home and in the school.

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