

Domestic Violence against Children, and Its Relationship with Their Aggressive Behavior

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Abstract

The study aimed at investigating the relationship between domestic violence against children and their aggressive behavior, among the study sample consisted of (100) male and female students from Alrai Schools in Amman Jordan; the randomly sample is distributed by choosing (25 male students; and 25 female students from the sixth grade, and 25 male students; and 25 female students from the seventh grade). The researcher has adopted the descriptive analytical methodology, by using a questionnaire composed of 14 paragraphs as the study tool. The results of the study show that no relationship between domestic violence and aggressive behavior upon students' stage, and also show that there is a relationship between domestic violence and aggressive behavior upon students' gender. Finally the researcher recommended further studies to be conducted in this field in Jordan; and increase awareness of domestic violence against children, and its relationship with their aggressive behavior through the intensification of family and community programs through various media, enactment of laws and legislation and regulations for dealing with cases of children exposed to violence, and spread awareness among community members about the seriousness of this phenomenon and the importance of reporting such violence.

1.1 Introduction

Family is the first social institution in which the child grows and acquires right and wrong standards. But what if this important foundation starts to exercise various types of violence against children, then it will turn to a weapon; for the emergence of the so-called behavioral disorders.

How many actions and behaviors practiced by parents on children that leave marks, and does not appear in near term, and do not disappear that easy; as it will lead to disturbance and disorder (Holt; Buckley and Whelan, 2008).

Based on this it could be argued that aggressive behavior and violence are two sides of the same coin, namely, create personalized abnormal and unacceptable social individual, and always punished by isolation, and without even attempting to understand the factors that led to the development of this disordered growth of behaviors (World Health Organisation. 2013).

Children need a safe and secure home, free of violence, and parents that love and protect them. They need to have a sense of routine and stability, so that when things go wrong in the outside world, home is a place of comfort, help and support. For too many children, home is far from a safe haven. Every year, hundreds of millions of children are exposed to domestic violence at home, and this has a powerful and profound impact on their lives and hopes for the future (Evans; Davies and DiLillo, 2008).

These children not only watch one parent violently assaulting another, they often hear the distressing sounds of violence, or may be aware of it from many telltale signs. Violence in the home is one of the most pervasive human rights challenges of our time. It remains a largely hidden problem that few countries, communities or families openly confront. Violence in the home is not limited by geography, ethnicity, or status; it is a global phenomenon.

1.2 Problem Statement

Unfortunately the Jordanian society began to show some family deformities on the surface in recent times, and of family violence against children, which has become of a serious problem of our Jordanian modern society.

The tragedy stationed in that; violence against children is in a world of darkness, which began the same definition in the form of behavioral disorders, and visible aggressive behaviors.

We hear every day the wonder of children's stories and their behavior in various stages of education, specifically in the elementary stage; as we find students who ride roughshod over the mentor and assault colleagues, even adding abnormal behaviors and aggressive mouthpiece of various images about themselves.

1.3 Questions of the study

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the domestic violence and aggressive behavior upon students' stage?
2. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the domestic violence and aggressive behavior upon students' gender?

1.4 Significance of the study

The importance of this study stems out of these following points:

- a. Shed light on the phenomenon of domestic violence, especially against children.
- b. Instruct parents to the seriousness of domestic violence and exercises that lead to behavioral disorders in children.
- c. The prevalence of this problem dramatically in our society and the lack of research dealt with.
- d. Identify the relationship between domestic violence and aggressive behavior among students in the elementary stage.
- e. Identify whether there were differences between males and females in the domestic violence they receive.

1.5 Literature review

Domestic and family violence and child protection are significant social issues which have become the focus of increased community concern and attention. Both are predominantly about violence and abuse within the family home but, despite these commonalities, societal responses to both issues have developed separately. Historically, community awareness, legislation, policies and practices, and treatment and support programs were developed individually, with different organisations tasked to respond to either child abuse or to domestic violence (Franklin, 2010).

In recent years, a serious debate has erupted among activists, activist organizations, and individuals about the nature of domestic violence and, especially, the gender of the perpetrators. Decades after first bringing the problem to public awareness, feminist activists now confront a growing chorus of researchers and political activists who claim that women and men are victimized by domestic violence in roughly equal numbers (Pleck, Pleck, Grossman, & Bart, 1978; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1993; Steinmetz, 1978; Straton, 1994).

There is a wide range of terminology associated with domestic and family violence in the community, within legislation, and in literature and research. The terms used may broaden or narrow the meaning and scope of the violence and include: domestic violence; family violence; spousal violence; wife beating; and intimate partner violence (Little et al, 2012).

1.5.1 Forms of domestic and family violence

In relationships not impacted by violence, respect, equality and independence between household members is evident. Arguments may occur but opinions can be expressed freely without fear of reprisal (Lewis, 2011).

In comparison, a relationship impacted by violence does not include respect and equality. The perpetrator uses tactics aimed at achieving power, control, dependence and dominance over the victim. The resulting fear experienced by the victim is used as a tool, together with ongoing veiled or real threats of violence. Where a threat has been carried out in a previous incident of violence, further threats and the constant fear of more violence may constitute the main form of abuse, with little overt conflict being obvious (Bediand and Goddard, 2006).

Although physical violence is often identified by the community as the main form of domestic and family violence, there are equally damaging non-physical behaviours that must be categorized as abusive and be identified and recognized by the child safety officer. The categories of violence are:

1. **Physical abuse:** Includes directly assaulting a person, their child, a pet or property and includes the use of weapons and reckless behavior. Examples include: - pushing, slapping, punching, kicking, choking, biting, shaking, inflicting burns, hair pulling - using a weapon, for example, belting, stoning, flogging with a stick, spearing - destroying property or possessions, for example, clothes, personal items, furniture - being cruel to pets, including in front of family members - dangerous driving of vehicles -

locking people out of the house - locking people inside a room or house, depriving them of their liberty
 - denying access to needed medical/dental care – homicide (Mouzos, and Makkai, 2004).

2. **Verbal and emotional abuse:** Verbal abuse includes the intent to humiliate, degrade, demean, threaten, coerce or intimidate and includes the use of derogatory language or continual ‘put-downs’ to highlight a particular part of a person’s being or their societal role. Consequently, the person may experience this abuse as an attack on their identity resulting in psychological harm. As a result, verbal abuse is closely related to emotional abuse. Emotional or psychological abuse can leave a person feeling that they are to blame for the problems in the family or in a relationship. Examples of verbal and emotional abuse include: - using words or phrases such as ‘stupid’, ‘brainless’, ‘you’re no good at anything’ - attacking a person’s confidence or self-esteem by denigrating the person’s life, including their cultural practices and beliefs, or making constant comparisons to other peers, lowering a person’s confidence, self esteem and self worth - intimidating behaviours - making threats to harm or kill a person, child, relative or pet - making threats to destroy property or possessions - harassment such as constant phone calls and/or repeated visits to the workplace - withdrawing from a person by refusing to speak to or acknowledge them - refusing to engage with a person on any joint activities - laying blame on a person for something that happens - overworking someone or keeping them from getting enough sleep - threatening to commit suicide if the relationship ends (Fulu et al, 2013).
3. **Spiritual or cultural abuse:** Is when power and control is used to deny a partner or family member their human, cultural or spiritual rights and needs. It can also include using religion or culture as an excuse to commit particular abuses to justify the behavior (Adams, 2006). Examples include: - denying access to cultural land, sites or family - denying access to cultural or spiritual ceremonies or rites - preventing religious observances or practices - forcing religious ways and practices against a person’s own beliefs - undermining the person’s cultural background, particularly for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds - threatening deportation, or to withdraw support for applications made through Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs - denying a person their cultural heritage (Ma’a, 2012).
4. **Social abuse:** Social abuse and isolation is commonly used by perpetrators to separate the victim from supportive friends, family and community agencies. This has particular relevance for women in rural and remote areas where there is limited access to cheap transportation, where firearms are more common, there is increased isolation from neighbors and support services, and communities are small. This abuse may also be more prevalent for women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities (United Nations Secretary-General, 2006).
5. **Economic or financial abuse:** Involves the unequal control of finances in a relationship or family and the deprivation of basic necessities. Examples include: - exercising total control of finances in order to increase the victim’s powerlessness and dependency (Secretariat of the Pacific Community. 2009).

1.6 Methods and procedures

1.6.1 The study sample

The study sample consisted of (100) male and female students; intentionally chosen upon teachers remarks of hostile and low grades students from the elementary stage at Alrai Schools (the study Population) in Amman-Jordan, and distributed as shown in table (1):

Table (1): distribution of the study sample

Study sample	Male	female
Sixth grade	25	25
Seventh grade	25	25
Total	50	50

1.6.2 Study tools

The study used the following tools:

Domestic violence questionnaire: prepared by the researcher, in order to measure the degree of domestic violence against children of the study sample; the questionnaire is composed of 14 paragraphs, in the way the count was corrected on the following possibilities, and by giving it certain degrees as follows:

1. Highly agree: given 5 degrees.
2. Agree: given average 4 degrees.
3. No answer: given 3 degrees.
4. Disagree: given 2 degrees
5. Highly disagree: given 1 degree

The questionnaire paragraphs, upon the five-point Likert scale; to measure the variables of the study, and for the purposes of the analysis the weights of the answers were distributed as shown in the table (2):

Table (2) the distribution of response options in the questionnaire according to the five-point Likert scale

option	Class
Strongly Agree	5
Agree	4
NA	3
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

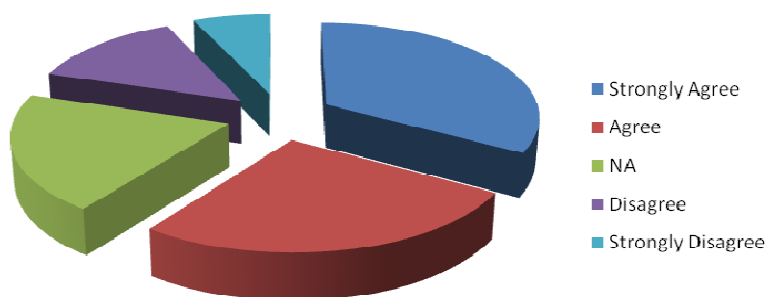


Figure (1): Graphic distribution of the response options in the questionnaire according to the five-point Likert scale.

1.6.3 Research Methodology

The methodology adopted by the researcher is a descriptive survey methodology; for being one of the most popular methodologies used in the field of behavioural science (Wright, Debra et al, 2010), which applies to this study aiming to analyse the relationship between domestic violence against children and their aggressive behavior, by using the techniques of the field survey and collecting data from the study sample by questionnaire

1.7 Study results

The arithmetic means and the standard deviations of the respondent's answers to the questionnaire paragraphs is illustrated in table (3), and then testing the respondents' point of view regarding the questionnaire (14) paragraphs.

Table (3): The arithmetic means and the standard deviations of the respondent's answers

No	Paragraph	Arithmetic mean	Slandered deviation	Rank	level
1	one of my parents called with a disgraceful titles	3.25	0.95	10	Medium
2	one of my parents yells at me	3.87	1.01	5	High
3	one of my parents insults me for no reason	4.01	0.96	3	High
4	my parents verbal insults hurt my feelings	4.13	0.90	1	High
5	my parents make fun of me in front of others	3.62	0.91	7	Medium
6	one of my parents severely beaten one of my family members	3.44	1.02	9	Medium
7	I saw one of my family members being severely beaten	3.59	0.53	8	Medium
8	had been severely beaten, which summoned me going to the hospital	3.01	0.96	13	Medium
9	had been slapped in the face more than anywhere else	2.53	1.09	14	Low
10	suffered from forms of cruel and painful punishment	3.22	0.97	11	Medium
11	My parents grounded me of the things that I love	4.05	0.89	2	High
12	been kicked out of the house by a member of my family	3.08	0.92	12	Medium
13	forced to follow my father's favorite programs	3.89	0.96	4	High
14	my parents cut my financial aid as a punishment	3.74	0.95	6	High
Total		3.53	0.94		Medium

Results in table (3) show that the arithmetical means for answers of the study sample that measure the relationship between domestic violence against children and their aggressive behavior ranged between (4.13 - 2.53), and the standard deviations ranged between (1.09 - 0.89). Also noted that the paragraph, which states "my parents verbal insults hurt my feelings" had the highest approval grades; as its arithmetic mean was (4.13) and its standard deviation was (0.90), while the paragraph, which states "had been slapped in the face more than anywhere else" had the lowest approval grades; as its arithmetic mean was (2.53) and its standard deviation was (1.09).

Overall, the general average of the arithmetic mean for the answers of the respondents is equivalent to (3.53) and the standard deviation is equivalent to (0.94), which indicates the approval of the respondents upon the scale of these paragraphs was medium, and that their attitudes were positive.

1.7.1 Study findings

1.7.1.1 Trends of the first question: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the domestic violence and aggressive behavior upon students' stage?

For answering the first question in finding the relationship between the domestic violence and aggressive behavior upon students' stage, it is noted from the simple regression analysis results described in table (4) that there is no effect of the students' stage on the relationship between the domestic violence and aggressive behavior.

Table (4): Testing results of the first question

Significant (T)	Calculated (T)	Tabulated (T)	(R) Square	(R)
0.000	1.96	23.230	0.679	0.842

This statistically significant effect at the statistically significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), as the calculated (T) value is (1.96), which is lower than tabulated (T) value, is in line with the simple regression analysis results that explain the (67.9%) variance in the students' responses, and according to that, the results show no relationship between domestic violence and aggressive behavior upon students' stage.

1.7.1.2 Trends of the second question: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the domestic violence and aggressive behavior upon students' gender?

For answering the second question in finding the relationship between the domestic violence and aggressive behavior upon students' gender, it is noted from the simple regression analysis results described in table (5) that there is an effect of the students' gender on the relationship between the domestic violence and aggressive behavior.

Table (5): Testing results of the second question

Significant (T)	Calculated (T)	Tabulated (T)	(R) Square	(R)
0.000	8.981	1.85	0.189	0.454

This statistically significant effect at the statistically significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), as the calculated (T) value is (8.981), which is higher than tabulated (T) value, is in line with the simple regression analysis results that explain the (18.9%) variance in the students' responses, and according to that, the results show that there is a relationship between domestic violence and aggressive behavior upon students' gender.

1.8 Study findings

Results show that, the overall, the general average of the arithmetic mean for the answers of the respondents is equivalent to (3.53) and the standard deviation is equivalent to (0.94), which indicates the approval of the respondents upon the scale of the study tool paragraphs; with medium level, and that their attitudes were positive; this is emphasized in Fulu et al study (2013) in indicating that, children can experience abuse as an attack on their identity resulting in psychological harm. And according to the responses, results show no relationship between domestic violence and aggressive behavior upon students' stage; which reflects no impact of students' stage in determining the relationship between domestic violence and aggressive behavior among abused students; and this is argued by Franklin study (2010) indicating that domestic and family violence and child protection are significant social issues regardless his/her age.

Results show that, there is a relationship between domestic violence and aggressive behavior upon students' gender; which is argued by Pleck, Pleck, Grossman, & Bart (1978); Schwartz & DeKeseredy (1993); Steinmetz (1978) and Straton (1994) studies confirming that males and females are not victimized by domestic violence equally.

1.9 Recommendations

Based on the study results, the researcher recommended the following recommendations:

1. Increase awareness of domestic violence against children, and its relationship with their aggressive behavior through the intensification of family and community programs through various media.
2. Enactment of laws and legislation and regulations for dealing with cases of children exposed to violence.
3. Spread awareness among community members about the seriousness of this phenomenon and the importance of reporting such violence.
4. Provide psychological and physical rehabilitation of children abused.
5. Support the role of the social psychologist as a therapist for abused children in school and at home.

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