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## PARENTAL CONFLICT, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ABIA STATE

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### Abstract

*This study examined the influence of parental conflict and domestic abuse on the classroom behaviour of secondary school students in the Aba Education Zone of Abia State, Nigeria. The family is the primary agent of socialization, and persistent exposure to conflict, violence, and abuse within the home can significantly disrupt adolescents' emotional stability and academic engagement. Specifically, the study investigated the relationships between parental conflict, domestic abuse, physical violence, sexual abuse, and students' classroom behaviour, as well as gender differences in these influences. A correlational survey design was adopted. The population comprised approximately 1,900 SS2 students in public co-educational secondary schools within the zone. A sample of 400 students (200 males and 200 females) was selected using purposive and simple random sampling techniques from 20 schools across four Local Government Areas. Data were collected using two researcher-developed instruments: the Parental Conflict and Domestic Abuse Questionnaire (PCDAQ) and the Classroom Behaviour Questionnaire (CBQ). The instruments were face-validated by experts and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.81 using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation, and paired t-test at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed significant relationships between parental conflict, domestic abuse, physical violence, sexual abuse, and students' classroom*

behaviour. Students exposed to these home stressors exhibited aggression, withdrawal, inattentiveness, low motivation, and noncompliance with classroom rules. All five null hypotheses were rejected, indicating that family-related stressors significantly influence classroom behaviour. Furthermore, significant gender differences were observed, with female students being more adversely affected. The study concluded that unsafe and conflict-ridden home environments negatively impact students' behavioural outcomes in school. It recommended parental sensitization programs, strengthened school counselling services, gender-sensitive interventions, and collaborative child protection policies to promote students' emotional well-being and positive classroom behaviour.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The family is universally recognized as the primary social unit responsible for the upbringing, protection and emotional stability of children. It is within the family that children first learn patterns of behaviour, acquire values and develop attitudes that shape their personality and academic experiences. However, in recent times, many families in Nigeria have been experiencing increasing levels of parental conflict and domestic abuse, a situation that poses a serious threat to the emotional and psychological well-being of children. This challenge is particularly evident in many communities within the Aba Education Zone of Abia State, where economic hardship, unemployment, cultural pressures and marital instability contribute to rising cases of conflict and abuse in the home.

Parental conflict refers to persistent disagreements, verbal quarrels, hostility, or lack of cooperation between parents. Domestic abuse includes physical violence, emotional torture, intimidation, threats and harmful behaviours occurring within the family setting. When these negative experiences occur repeatedly, the home ceases to be a place of love, safety and comfort, becoming instead a source of fear, trauma and emotional instability for children who depend on their parents for guidance and support.

Many families in Nigeria, particularly within the Aba Education Zone, experience rising levels of parental conflict and domestic abuse, which are likely to affect the emotional and psychological well-being of children. Economic hardship, unemployment and urban pressures often exacerbate tension between parents, resulting in verbal arguments, physical violence and neglect of children's emotional needs (Adeniyi, Anyama, & Soriyan, 2023). In addition, cultural norms that condone male dominance and harsh discipline, combined with parental substance misuse or mental health challenges, may further expose children to unsafe home environments (Allen et al., 2022). Children who witness or experience these forms of abuse frequently carry emotional trauma to school, which will likely affect their classroom behaviour, concentration and peer interactions (Celestina, 2024).

Specifically, physical violence and sexual abuse in the home are expected to cause profound emotional and behavioural challenges in adolescents. Evidence from low- and middle-income settings demonstrates that children exposed to such abuse exhibit aggression, withdrawal, anxiety, poor academic focus and low self-concept (Backhaus, Blackwell, & Gardner, 2024; Adeniyi, Anyama, & Soriyan, 2023). These behavioural disruptions are likely to undermine the teaching-learning process and create a classroom environment fraught with challenges for both teachers and students. Consequently, understanding the causes and effects of parental conflict and domestic abuse is critical for developing interventions that promote students' well-being, positive classroom behaviour and academic outcomes.

Classroom behaviour encompasses observable actions such as attention, participation, compliance with rules, peer interactions and aggression. Adolescents exposed to parental conflict and domestic abuse often exhibit behavioural problems including aggression, withdrawal, disobedience, low motivation and absenteeism. In Aba Education Zone, where students experience diverse family dynamics, the impact of parental conflict and domestic abuse on classroom behaviour is expected to be significant. Understanding these variables is essential for planning interventions to promote positive behaviour, emotional stability and academic performance.

In an ideal setting, children grow up in homes where parents resolve conflicts peacefully, provide emotional support and maintain a safe and nurturing environment. In such homes, children feel secure, valued and protected from all forms of abuse. These conditions foster positive psychological development, self-confidence and appropriate social behaviours, which reflect positively in the classroom.

Unfortunately, many secondary school students in the Aba Education Zone experience a different reality. Numerous homes are marked by persistent parental conflict, verbal and physical abuse, neglect and in some cases, sexual abuse. These negative experiences at home create stress, fear and emotional trauma in children, which will likely manifest as aggression, withdrawal, inattention, disobedience, low motivation and absenteeism in school. Teachers and school administrators often report that such behavioural problems disrupt teaching, peer interactions and the overall learning environment.

Despite the prevalence of these issues, limited empirical research has specifically examined how parental conflict and domestic abuse influence students' classroom behaviour in the Aba Education Zone. Gender differences in the effects of parental conflict and abuse remain largely unexplored. Filling these gaps is essential to understanding how home-related conflicts shape behavioural outcomes in schools. This study will provide insights to guide interventions, inform parents, support teachers and help policymakers develop programs that enhance student well-being and improve classroom behaviour.

### 1.1 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between parental conflict, domestic abuse and classroom behaviour of secondary school students in the Aba Education Zone. Specifically, the study will seek to:

1. Determine the relationship between parental conflict and classroom behaviour of secondary school students.
2. Determine the relationship between domestic abuse and classroom behaviour of secondary school students.

3. Examine the relationship between physical violence in the home and students' classroom behaviour.
4. Examine the relationship between sexual abuse in the home and students' classroom behaviour.
5. Determine gender differences in the influence of parental conflict and domestic abuse on classroom behaviour.

### Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between parental conflict and classroom behaviour of students in the Aba Education Zone?
2. What is the relationship between domestic abuse and classroom behaviour of students in the Aba Education Zone?
3. What is the relationship between physical violence at home and students' classroom behaviour in the Aba Education Zone?
4. What is the relationship between sexual abuse at home and students' classroom behaviour in the Aba Education Zone?
5. Are there gender differences in the influence of parental conflict and domestic abuse on classroom behaviour?

### Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant relationship between parental conflict and classroom behaviour of students in the Aba Education Zone.

H02: There is no significant relationship between domestic abuse and classroom behaviour of students in the Aba Education Zone.

H03: There is no significant relationship between physical violence at home and students' classroom behaviour in the Aba Education Zone.

H04: There is no significant relationship between sexual abuse at home and students' classroom behaviour in the Aba Education Zone.

H05: There is no significant difference between male and female students in the influence of parental conflict and domestic abuse on classroom behaviour.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Design

The study adopted a correlational survey design. According to Umukoro (2009), this design establishes the relationship between two or more variables within a population.

### Area of Study

The study was carried out in Aba Education Zone, Aba, Abia State. Abia State is in southeastern Nigeria, lying approximately between latitudes  $5^{\circ} 20'$  and  $6^{\circ} 45'$  North and longitudes  $7^{\circ} 20'$  and  $8^{\circ} 10'$  East. The state shares boundaries with Imo State (west), Rivers State (south), Cross River State (southeast), Ebonyi State (east) and Enugu State (north). Aba Education Zone comprises four Local Government Areas (Aba North, Aba South, Obingwa and Osioma Ngwa).

The people of the zone are predominantly Igbo, speaking the general Igbo language with slight dialect variations. The major occupations include trading, civil service, farming and artisanal work. The zone has a high regard for education and cultural values.

Aba Education Zone contains 52 public secondary schools, which made it a suitable location to study how parental conflict and domestic abuse affected SS2 students' classroom behaviour.

### Population of the Study

The population comprised all SS2 students in co-educational secondary schools within Aba Education Zone. According to the State Ministry of Education, there were approximately 1,900 SS2 students in the zone. This group was chosen because adolescents at this stage are at a critical developmental period where exposure to parental conflict and domestic abuse is likely to impact social and academic behaviour.

### Sample and Sampling Techniques

From the total population, 400 SS2 students (200 males and 200 females) were selected using a purposive and simple random sampling technique. First, five co-educational schools were randomly selected from each of the four Local Government Areas, making a total of 20 schools. Then, in each selected school, 10 SS2 students (5 males and 5 females) were chosen with the assistance of school counsellors. This sample represented approximately 21% of the total SS2 population, which was appropriate for a correlational study.

### Instruments for Data Collection

Data were collected using two questionnaires developed by the researchers '*Parental Conflict and Domestic Abuse Questionnaire (PCDAQ)*' Contained two sections: Section A for demographic information and Section B for items reflecting causes and effects of parental conflict and domestic abuse. Items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale: Very High Extent (VHE) = 4, High Extent (HE) = 3, Low Extent (LE) = 2, Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1. Classroom Behaviour Questionnaire (CBQ): Measured classroom behaviour (attention, participation, social interactions and aggression) using a 4-point scale: Very Much Like Me (VMLM) = 4, Much Like Me (MLM) = 3, Little Like Me (LLM) = 2, None Like Me (NLM) = 1.

### Validation of the Instruments

The instruments were face-validated by the researcher's supervisor and three experts in Teacher Education Department at National Institute for Nigerian languages, Aba, Abia State. They reviewed the items for clarity, sequence, relevance and language construction. Suggestions from the validators were incorporated to finalize the instruments, ensuring they were suitable and valid for the study.

### Reliability of the Instruments

To establish reliability, 20 copies of the questionnaires were administered to SS2 students in a different education zone in Aba. After two weeks, the same students were re-tested. Data were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation, yielding a reliability coefficient of  $r = 0.81$ , indicating the instruments were highly reliable and stable.

### Method of Data Collection

The questionnaires were administered by the researcher with assistance from school guidance counsellors. Completed questionnaires were collected immediately to ensure a high return rate. Students were assured of confidentiality and anonymity in responding.

### Method of Data Analysis

Mean and standard deviation were used to answer descriptive research questions. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed to test the relationships between parental conflict,

domestic abuse and classroom behaviour. The strength of correlation was interpreted using Creswell's scale:  $\pm 0.7$ – $1.0$  (high),  $\pm 0.30$ – $0.69$  (moderate),  $\pm 0.00$ – $0.29$  (weak/no correlation). Simple linear regression was used to test hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance, determining the influence of parental conflict and domestic abuse on classroom behaviour of SS2 students.

### 3. RESULT

#### Answers to Research Questions

##### 3.1.1 Research Question 1: What is the relationship between parental conflict and classroom behaviour of students in the Aba Education Zone?

**Table 3.1 Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Relationship between Parental Conflict and Classroom Behaviour**

Variables	N	Mean ( $X$ )	SD
Parental Conflict	400	63.24	8.65
Students' Classroom Behaviour	400	45.10	12.34

The mean score and standard deviation for parental conflict were ( $X = 63.24$ ,  $SD = 8.65$ ), while the mean and standard deviation for students' classroom behaviour were ( $X = 45.10$ ,  $SD = 12.34$ ). The relatively higher mean score of parental conflict suggests that conflict at home may significantly influence students' behaviour in the classroom. This implies that students exposed to parental conflict are more likely to exhibit disruptive, inattentive, or disengaged behaviour.

##### 3.1.2 Research Question 2: What is the relationship between domestic abuse and classroom behaviour of students in the Aba Education Zone?

**Table 3.2 Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Relationship between Domestic Abuse and Classroom Behaviour**

Variables	Mean ( $X$ )	SD
Domestic Abuse	61.85	7.92
Students' Classroom Behaviour	45.10	12.34

Table 4.2 shows that domestic abuse had a high mean score ( $X = 61.85$ ,  $SD = 7.92$ ) relative to students' classroom behaviour ( $X = 45.10$ ,  $SD = 12.34$ ), suggesting that students experiencing abuse at home are likely to display poor classroom behaviour, including withdrawal, inattentiveness, or aggression.

##### 3.1.3 Research Question 3: What is the relationship between physical violence at home and students' classroom behaviour?

**Table 3.3 Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Relationship between Physical Violence and Classroom Behaviour**

Variables	Mean ( $X$ )	SD
Physical Violence	59.20	7.10
Students' Classroom Behaviour	45.10	12.34

The table indicates that exposure to physical violence at home is associated with higher levels of classroom behavioural problems. The mean score for physical violence ( $X = 59.20$ ,  $SD = 7.10$ ) is considerably higher than the mean score for students' classroom behaviour ( $X = 45.10$ ,  $SD = 12.34$ ), suggesting that students who experience or witness physical abuse tend to exhibit disruptive

behaviours, such as aggression, inattentiveness, or defiance, in the classroom. This relationship implies that the home environment plays a significant role in shaping students' behavioural responses in school

##### 3.1.4 Research Question 4: What is the relationship between sexual abuse at home and students' classroom behaviour?

**Table 3.4 Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Relationship between Sexual Abuse and Classroom Behaviour**

Variables	Mean ( $X$ )	SD
Sexual Abuse	55.80	6.78
Students' Classroom Behaviour	45.10	12.34

The mean score for sexual abuse ( $X = 55.80$ ,  $SD = 6.78$ ) indicates that students experiencing sexual abuse tend to exhibit moderate to high classroom behavioural problems. The lower mean score for classroom behaviour ( $X = 45.10$ ,  $SD = 12.34$ ) relative to the abuse score suggests a clear impact of trauma on attentiveness, self-control and compliance with classroom rules. These students may withdraw from social interactions, show anxiety or depression and have difficulty maintaining focus on academic tasks.

##### 3.1.5 Research Question 5: Are there gender differences in the influence of parental conflict and domestic abuse on classroom behaviour?

**Table 3.5 Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Gender Differences in Classroom Behaviour**

Variables	Gender	Mean ( $X$ )	SD
Parental Conflict & Domestic Abuse	Male	62.50	8.20
	Female	64.40	7.45
Students' Classroom Behaviour	Male	44.20	11.90
	Female	46.00	12.50

Table 4.5 shows that female students had slightly higher mean scores for parental conflict and domestic abuse compared to males and correspondingly higher mean scores for classroom behavioural problems. This suggests that female students may be more sensitive to the emotional and psychological effects of parental conflict and domestic abuse, resulting in more pronounced behavioural challenges at school, such as withdrawal, anxiety, or passive aggression.

### 3.2 Testing of Null Hypotheses

#### 3.2.1 Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between parental conflict and classroom behaviour of students in the Aba Education Zone.

**Table 3.6 Paired t-test Analysis of Parental Conflict and Classroom Behaviour (N=400)**

Variable	Mean ( $X$ )	SD	t-value	df	Sig. (p)
Parental Conflict	63.24	8.65	14.56	399	0.000
Students' Classroom Behaviour	45.10	12.34			

The t-test result ( $t = 14.56$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates that parental conflict significantly influences the classroom behaviour of SS2 students. The relatively high mean score for parental conflict suggests that students frequently witness disagreements or tension at home, which may lead to behavioural manifestations such as irritability, inattention, aggression, or social withdrawal in school.

**3.2.2Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between domestic abuse and classroom behaviour of students.**

**Table 3.7 Paired t-test Analysis of Domestic Abuse and Classroom Behaviour (N=400)**

Variable	Mean ( $X$ )	SD	t-value	df	Sig. (p)
Domestic Abuse	61.85	7.92	12.87	399	0.000
Students' Classroom Behaviour	45.10	12.34			

The analysis reports a mean score of 55.80 ( $SD = 6.78$ ) for sexual abuse and 45.10 ( $SD = 12.34$ ) for classroom behaviour, with a t-value of 9.87 and  $p = 0.000$ . The null hypothesis is rejected. Sexual abuse at home has a significant influence on students' classroom behaviour. Students who experience sexual abuse are likely to face emotional distress, anxiety and difficulty concentrating, which leads to classroom behavioural problems such as disengagement, irritability and lack of participation. The finding highlights the critical need for school-based counseling, protective policies and awareness programs to ensure that affected students receive support to cope with trauma and continue learning effectively.

**3.2.3Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between physical violence at home and students' classroom behaviour.**

**Table 3.8 Paired t-test Analysis of Physical Violence and Classroom Behaviour (N=400)**

Variable	Mean ( $X$ )	SD	t-value	df	Sig. (p)
Physical Violence	59.20	7.10	11.34	399	0.000
Students' Classroom Behaviour	45.10	12.34			

The results reveal a mean score of 59.20 ( $SD = 7.10$ ) for physical violence and 45.10 ( $SD = 12.34$ ) for classroom behaviour, with a t-value of 11.34 and  $p = 0.000$ . The null hypothesis is rejected. Physical violence at home significantly affects students' classroom behaviour. Students exposed to physical violence may exhibit aggression, disrupt class activities, avoid learning tasks, or display defiant behaviour. This shows that home environments with physical violence can negatively shape students' social and emotional development, which then manifests in school behaviour. The finding underscores the need for intervention programs that address home violence and teach students coping strategies for managing its effects.

**3.2.4Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between sexual abuse at home and students' classroom behaviour.**

**Table 3.9 Paired t-test Analysis of Sexual Abuse and Classroom Behaviour (N=400)**

Variable	Mean ( $X$ )	SD	t-value	df	Sig. (p)
Sexual Abuse	55.80	6.78	9.87	399	0.000
Students' Classroom Behaviour	45.10	12.34			

The analysis reports a mean score of 55.80 ( $SD = 6.78$ ) for sexual abuse and 45.10 ( $SD = 12.34$ ) for classroom behaviour, with a t-value of 9.87 and  $p = 0.000$ . The null hypothesis is rejected. Sexual abuse at home has a significant influence on students' classroom behaviour. Students who experience sexual abuse are likely to face emotional distress, anxiety and difficulty concentrating, which leads to classroom behavioural problems such as disengagement, irritability and lack of participation. The finding highlights the critical need for school-based counseling, protective policies and awareness programs to ensure that affected students receive support to cope with trauma and continue learning effectively.

**3.2.5Hypothesis 5: There is no significant difference between male and female students in the influence of parental conflict and domestic abuse on classroom behaviour.**

**Table 4.10 Paired t-test Analysis of Gender Differences (N=400)**

Variable	Gender	Mean ( $X$ )	SD	t-value	df	Sig. (p)
Parental Conflict & Domestic Abuse	Male	62.50	8.20	3.45	398	0.013
	Female	64.40	7.45			

The table shows that female students had a higher mean score (64.40,  $SD = 7.45$ ) than male students (62.50,  $SD = 8.20$ ) for parental conflict and domestic abuse, with classroom behaviour means of 46.00 for females and 44.20 for males. The t-value = 3.45 and  $p = 0.013 < 0.05$ , so the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant gender difference in how parental conflict and domestic abuse influence classroom behaviour, with female students being more affected. This suggests that female students may internalize home stress more, leading to heightened emotional or behavioural challenges in school. Male students, although affected, may exhibit different coping mechanisms or less observable behavioural disruption. This finding implies that interventions should be gender-sensitive, providing tailored support for female students who are more vulnerable to behavioural issues arising from family conflicts or abuse.

## 4. Summary of Findings

This study investigated the influence of parental conflict, domestic abuse, physical violence, sexual abuse and gender differences on students' classroom behaviour in the Aba Education Zone. Five null hypotheses were formulated and tested using paired t-test at 0.05 level of significance. All five null hypotheses were rejected. The findings are summarized as follows:

1. There is a significant influence of parental conflict on students' classroom behaviour in the Aba Education Zone.
2. There is a significant influence of domestic abuse on students' classroom behaviour in the Aba Education Zone.
3. There is a significant influence of physical violence at home on students' classroom behaviour in the Aba Education Zone.
4. There is a significant influence of sexual abuse on students' classroom behaviour in the Aba Education Zone.
5. There is a significant gender difference in the influence of parental conflict and domestic abuse on students' classroom behaviour in the Aba Education Zone.

## Discussion of Findings

### 4.1 Influence of Parental Conflict on Students' Classroom Behaviour

The findings revealed a significant relationship between parental conflict and students' classroom behaviour, as shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.6 ( $t = 14.56$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Students exposed to parental conflicts were more likely to exhibit behavioural challenges such as aggression, inattentiveness, withdrawal and disengagement from classroom activities.

This result aligns with previous research indicating that economic hardship, unemployment and urban pressures often exacerbate tension between parents, resulting in verbal arguments, physical violence and neglect of children's emotional needs (Adeniyi, Anyama, & Soriyan, 2023). Cultural norms that condone male dominance and harsh discipline, combined with parental substance misuse or mental health challenges, may further expose children to unsafe home environments (Allen et al., 2022). Therefore, parental conflict creates a stressful and emotionally unstable home environment, which negatively affects students' focus, self-control and classroom participation.

### 4.2 Influence of Domestic Abuse on Students' Classroom Behaviour

Tables 4.2 and 4.7 show that domestic abuse significantly influences students' classroom behaviour ( $t = 12.87$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Students exposed to domestic abuse displayed higher levels of aggression, inattentiveness and disengagement from learning activities.

This finding is consistent with studies by Olatunde (2025) and Aye et al. (2024), which reported that victims of intimate partner violence experienced severe physical and psychological health consequences, including depression, low self-esteem, anxiety and inability to trust others. These outcomes can translate into classroom behavioural challenges, as children and adolescents exposed to domestic abuse are more likely to exhibit disengagement, poor concentration and difficulty complying with school rules. The results highlight that domestic abuse not only harms physical health but also disrupts educational experiences, requiring targeted interventions to support students' academic and social well-being.

### 4.3 Influence of Physical Violence on Students' Classroom Behaviour

Physical violence at home was found to significantly predict classroom behaviour ( $t = 11.34$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), as shown in Tables 4.3 and 4.8. Students who experienced physical abuse exhibited aggression, defiance, anxiety and difficulty following school rules.

Empirical evidence supports this finding, indicating that children exposed to physical violence are prone to behavioural problems such as withdrawal, poor academic focus and low self-concept (Yusuf et al., 2021; Celestina, 2024). Such experiences of trauma can disrupt adolescents' ability to engage positively in classroom activities, reflecting the serious emotional and behavioural consequences of unsafe home environments.

### 4.4 Influence of Sexual Abuse on Students' Classroom Behaviour

Sexual abuse was found to significantly affect students' classroom behaviour ( $t = 9.87$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), as reflected in Tables 4.4 and 4.9. Victims of sexual abuse demonstrated emotional distress, reduced attention span, difficulties interacting with peers and noncompliance with school rules.

These findings are corroborated by empirical studies showing that childhood sexual abuse has long-term psychological and behavioural consequences, including anxiety, low self-esteem, social withdrawal and impaired academic functioning (Duru et al., 2025; Handayani, Nursyirwan Effendi, Machmud, & Duarsa, 2018; Irfan, 2023). The results highlight the urgent need for school-based support systems to help students cope with the trauma of sexual abuse and maintain classroom engagement.

### 4.5 Gender Differences in the Influence of Parental Conflict and Domestic Abuse

The study revealed significant gender differences in the effects of parental conflict and domestic abuse on classroom behaviour, with female students being more affected than males ( $t = 3.45$ ,  $p = 0.013$ ), as shown in Tables 4.5 and 4.10. Female students appear more emotionally sensitive and vulnerable to home-related stressors.

This finding aligns with previous research in Nigeria, showing that female children are more likely to internalize emotional distress from domestic violence, leading to behavioural problems such as anxiety, withdrawal and difficulty concentrating in school (Asagba, Noibi, & Ogueji, 2021; Mauki, Mutua, & Mbogo, 2018). Evidence also suggests that children who experience abuse or parental conflict carry emotional trauma into the classroom, affecting concentration, peer relationships and academic engagement (Celestina, 2024). These findings indicate the need for gender-sensitive interventions that address the specific vulnerabilities of female students in managing the effects of parental conflict and domestic abuse.

## 5. Conclusion

The study examined the influence of parental conflict, domestic abuse, physical violence, sexual abuse and gender differences on students' classroom behaviour in the Aba Education Zone. Findings revealed that all forms of family-related stressors significantly affect students' behaviour in school, manifesting as aggression, inattentiveness, withdrawal and noncompliance with classroom rules. Female students were found to be more vulnerable to the effects of parental conflict and domestic abuse, suggesting that gender plays a moderating role in how home stressors impact

classroom behaviour. The results underscore that students' emotional and psychological well-being at home directly influences their social interactions, attention and learning engagement at school. Consequently, creating safe, supportive and nurturing home environments is critical to promoting positive classroom behaviour and academic success.

### 5.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Parents should be sensitized on the effects of conflict, domestic abuse and violence on their children's emotional and academic development. Workshops, seminars and counselling programs should be organized to promote healthy family interactions and conflict resolution strategies.
2. Schools should establish or strengthen counselling units to provide psychological support to students who are victims of domestic violence, parental conflict, or sexual abuse.
3. Interventions aimed at mitigating the effects of home stressors on students should consider gender differences.
4. Schools should collaborate with social welfare agencies, community leaders and child protection organizations to identify and support children exposed to domestic abuse, physical and sexual violence and other forms of home-related stressors.
5. Government and educational authorities should implement policies that protect children from domestic abuse and ensure that mechanisms exist for reporting and addressing parental conflict, violence and neglect.

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