



## **The relationship between domestic violence towards children and psychological loneliness**

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### **Abstract**

Domestic violence towards children is a serious societal problem because of its negative impact on the individual and society. Domestic violence directed at children has negative reactions to the environment and individuals surrounding them, such as violence against others, theft, crime, lawlessness, drug and alcohol abuse. In view of the seriousness of the phenomenon of domestic violence, which has negative effects on the adolescent and his/her psychological health, and the devastating effects it has on society, the researcher felt the need to study the phenomenon of family violence directed at children and its impact on their sense of psychological loneliness. The researcher has used the descriptive approach to achieve the objectives of the study. This approach is based on reference to studies, articles and books related to the current subject to achieve the objectives of the study. The study concluded that there is an inverse correlation between the sense of security and the forms of domestic violence. Through the results of the current study, the researcher recommends in conducting further studies on domestic violence against other age groups and inviting governmental and non-governmental institutions to promote the social culture that is a source of domestic violence.

**Key words:** Domestic violence, children, psychological loneliness



## **1. Introduction**

The family is the first brick in building human beings and society. It plays a fundamental role in shaping the personality of human beings and in shaping their behavior in various stages of life. The family is a social institution that performs social, educational and psychological functions. Through the family, children acquire the general standards imposed by the prevailing culture patterns in society. This emphasizes the importance role of parents in shaping the personality of children, as they have a key role in the early socialization process, leaving clear fingerprints on the personality of children.

A teenager needs a family that does not only provide him with physiological needs, but also needs a family that provides him with his psychological, social, cultural and economic needs through human communication with them, and not by dealing with abuse, humiliation, beatings, neglect and isolation that lead to losing the family loses of its important as a place of love, peace and emotional support, and will be a source of many problems for adolescents (Jeevasutha and Hatta, 2013). Family in this situation can be more dangerous for children and adolescents than anywhere else.

Although domestic violence directed at children is not an old subject, it has only recently been given proper attention. The whole world is living a historic stage of global concern at the level of countries and peoples with children. This phenomenon emphasized that domestic violence directed at children is a recent term used to refer to direct and indirect acts directed by parents or guardians towards a child with the aim of causing psychological, verbal, physical or sexual harm (Alderson and Morrow, 2004). Family-oriented domestic violence involves many consequences and effects that take many forms, including physical, health and psychological. The most important of these consequences are the most serious psychological consequences of



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domestic violence directed at children, since they may not be manifest and their effects extend to the rest of the individual's life (Turner and Finkelhor, 2006). The current research is concerned with studying a topic of great importance and touching one of the most important categories of society which is examining the relationship between domestic violence towards children and psychological loneliness.

## **2. Study Problem**

Domestic violence towards children is a serious societal problem because of its negative impact on the individual and society. Domestic violence directed at children has negative reactions to the environment and individuals surrounding them, such as violence against others, theft, crime, lawlessness, drug and alcohol abuse.

This violence can extend to the psychological construction of a teenager where adolescents who are exposed to domestic violence have many problems and mental disorders such as anxiety disorders, depression, sleep and eating disorders, and speech disorders such as stuttering. Children may also lose the sense of security, and may be incapacitated and frustrated and failure to be able to communicate and build relationships with others (Kanchiputu and Mwale, 2016). Thus, family violence toward children can lead to increasing their sense of psychological loneliness. The sense of psychological loneliness expresses the feeling of the existence of a psychological gap separating the child from people to the extent that the child feels the lack of acceptance and love on the part of others or the consequent inability to form fruitful relationships and saturated with others (Cater and Overlien, 2013).

In view of the seriousness of the phenomenon of domestic violence, which has negative effects on the adolescent and his/her psychological health, and the devastating effects it has on society, the researcher felt the need to study the phenomenon of family violence directed at children and its impact on their sense of psychological loneliness.



### **3. Methodology**

The researcher will use the descriptive approach to achieve the objectives of the study. This approach is based on reference to studies, articles and books related to the current subject to achieve the objectives of the study.

### **4. Literature review**

#### **4.1 Domestic violence**

##### **4.1.1 The definitions of domestic violence**

The concept of domestic violence is one of the concepts that are not agreed upon. It is difficult to define this definition theoretically because it is related to the social, cultural and temporal context of the violence behavior. The behavior of domestic violence is related to custom and consensus and the social acceptance of a group within a social context. Thus, the frame of reference for judging these behaviors is variable and culturally governed, making it socially different, and the concept itself has multiple meanings. What is committed by parents for the purpose of education is different from what is committed by parents for satisfactory purposes, to satisfy sexual deviations, and what is committed in a culture and considered as a violence is not necessarily to be like that in another culture or in another society or even within the same society between the subculture and the mother culture (Alho, 2015).

Berry (1995) defined domestic violence as the unlawful use of force by an adult family member against another member of the family, who is the victim of domestic violence. Family violence is also defined as physical or psychological abuse of persons, which has a material or moral effect and is contrary to the law and punishable by law (Katby, 2012).

##### **4.1.2 Forms of domestic violence directed towards children**



There are several types of domestic violence directed towards children, including (Garbarino, 1980; English, 1998; Katby, 2012):

1. **Physical violence:** is the behavior that is characterized by physical abuse, such as punching, biting, burning, or any other method that harms the child. The father or guardian may not intend to harm the child, and the injury may be through overstatement or inappropriate corporal punishment of the child's age. Physical abuse includes the use of force Inappropriate and detrimental to growth.
2. **Psychological and emotional violence:** it is difficult to define emotional abuse in theory and practice. Emotional abuse ranges from refusing to smile at a child, to respond to his words by negligence, and to punish normal behavior, especially with regard to self-esteem in the child. Also it means preventing the child from become socially and psychologically. This type can lead to the concept of self-low and format the concept of negative self.
3. **Neglect:** the excessive neglect associated with physical and psychological violence may lead to death. Child neglect means failure to meet the basic needs of the child.
4. **Sexual violence:** is the exploitation of the child by the adult, and the acts of this type of violence range from insult to non-touch, such as pornography and infidelity and urging them to the actual sex practice.

## 4.2 Psychological loneliness

### 4.2.1 The concept of psychological loneliness

The concept of psychological loneliness is a relatively modern concept. In 1973, the book Weiss had the greatest psychological impact, and most researchers were later influenced by Weiss's writings on psychological loneliness (Seepersad, 1997).

Psychological loneliness has been defined as painful personal experience experienced



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by the individual due to his/her lack of acceptance, love and attention on the part of others, resulting in the inability to establish social relations saturated with intimacy, affection and intimate friendship (Rokach, 2004).

Psychological loneliness is also defined as a psychologically static state of painful feelings arising from the individual's sense of alienation, lack of understanding and rejection of others, or the loss of an appropriate partner for a loved one (Zysberg, 2015). These activities include the establishment of social relationships saturated with intimacy, affection and intimate friendship. Rook (1984) defined psychological loneliness as the individual's feeling of a psychological gap that distinguishes him/her from the individuals around him/her as a result of his/her lack of the possibility of engaging or entering into meaningful saturated relationships, which leads to his/her feeling of non-acceptance and rejection and neglect of others even though he/her is surrounded by them (Rook, 1984).

It is clear from the above that the sense of psychological loneliness is a situation that mainly arises from a deficiency in the social relations of the individual with others, which makes the individual feel pain and suffering because of his/her sense of non-acceptance and neglect of others. It also shows that the meaning of psychological loneliness does not agree with the objective isolation that compels such as incommunicado detention, and other cases in which a person loses his/her freedom and is isolated from others despite his/her will.

#### **4.2.2 Reasons of feeling with psychological loneliness**

Psychological loneliness has multiple causes, some of which are due to the nature of the people themselves and others to quantitative or qualitative disturbances in the form of social relations. The views of scientists differ about the factors responsible for psychological loneliness, whether they belong to the individual himself or to the



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surrounding social environment or both. Katby (2012) referred to two sets of reasons behind the individual's sense of loneliness:

1. Painful social attitudes.
2. Gender differences in different stages of life.

Rubinstein and Schaeffer hypothesized that the psychological loneliness of adolescents is related to their childhood. If a child experiences in his early years to separation case from parents because of divorce or loss of one of them, he or she has the highest level of psychological loneliness (Peach, 2002). And if the child is exposed to abandon, neglect and cruelty of parents, her/she will have an average level of feeling of psychological loneliness, but if children lived with their parents and knew that they are a source of security and confidence, they do not have any sense of psychological loneliness (Rokach and Neto, 2005). Peach (2002) noted that one of the most important reasons for loneliness is the loss of death to a person of importance. The experience of losing a child to a parent in childhood with death or divorce makes him a target of psychological loneliness.

The modern technological has weakened the social ties among the members of society, which has reduced the importance of the family role eliminated its format. The individual has lost many of the elements of normal personality, which makes the individual acquire values that may violate the habits of his family (Abdel Hamid, 1998).

#### **4.3 Domestic violence towards children and psychological loneliness**

The researchers noted that adolescents with domestic violence often impede their growth and psychological development in one form or another. Many of the negative effects of these behaviors on adolescents have been observed in all aspects of



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development, such as psychological, physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. These changes have been exacerbated over time, while there is evidence that these negative effects can be modified. However, this amendment requires time and effort, particularly early detection and intervention, and may not be available in many cases. Psychological, emotional and physical harm resulting from the child's vulnerability to violence depend on the nature and type of violence suffered by the child.

A series of studies were conducted to find the relationship between family violence against children and psychological loneliness. Al-Faraya (2006) conducted a study aimed at testing the definition of family violence directed towards children and its relation to the sense of security on a sample of 1248 students from the tenth grade in the governorate of Karak, Jordan. The study concluded that there is an inverse correlation between the sense of security and the forms of domestic violence .

Al-Dulaim (2008) conducted a study aimed at revealing the nature of the relationship between the sense of psychological reassurance and psychological loneliness among students of King Saud University in Riyadh. The study concluded that there is a significant correlation between psychological sense of feeling and psychological loneliness. Katby (2012) also conducted a study aimed at revealing the nature of the relationship between family violence directed towards children and the sense of psychological loneliness among the members of the research sample. The study found a statistically significant correlation between the levels of family violence directed at children and the degrees of psychological loneliness.

## **5. Conclusion**

The results showed that individuals with a high sense of psychological loneliness acknowledged that their parents did not spend enough time with them, did not understand their problems, did not try to help them when needed, and that adolescents





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who felt lonely felt that they lived in families that were emotionally cold in relations with parents severe cruelty, neglect, and the raising of psychological pain and parental domination. The results of the current research have found a correlation between the levels of family violence directed at children and the degrees of psychological loneliness. This means that the increase in the volume of domestic violence directed at children leads to the creation of a state of psychological loneliness in children.

Through the results of the current study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Conduct further studies on domestic violence against other age groups.
2. Inviting governmental and non-governmental institutions to promote the social culture that is a source of domestic violence.
3. Increase family counseling centers and work to activate and develop their role in line with the changes in the family and society.
4. Activating dialogue and discussion among the family members to give the children an opportunity to express their opinions and work to meet their physical and psychological needs.

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