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The Role of Counseling in Addressing Domestic Violence and Child Abuse

Adaobi Jennifer Iloakasia

Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe Anambra State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: Domestic violence and child abuse remain critical issues that deeply affect the emotional and psychological well-being of victims. Addressing these problems requires strategic interventions, particularly in the field of counseling. **Objective:** This study aims to identify how counseling can support victims of domestic violence and child abuse in their emotional and psychological recovery process. **Method:** A descriptive survey research design was employed. The sample consisted of 98 professional counselors and teachers from secondary schools and colleges, selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and validated by expert review. **Results:** Analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed a statistically significant result ($F = 5.215, p = .025$), indicating that early counseling interventions significantly promote emotional healing, enhance communication, and build resilience. These outcomes contribute to reducing the occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse. **Conclusion:** Counseling plays a vital role in helping victims manage emotional responses, break destructive behavioral patterns, and develop healthier coping strategies. **Originality/Value:** This study offers significant empirical contributions to the fields of crisis counseling, clinical psychology, and child/family welfare by demonstrating the vital role of early counseling interventions in fostering emotional healing, breaking destructive behavioral patterns, and building resilience among victims. These findings enrich the existing literature and serve as a strategic reference for professional counselors, social workers, educators, and policymakers in establishing standardized early-intervention protocols and developing integrated restorative counseling programs for survivors of domestic violence and child abuse.

1. INTRODUCTION

Counseling is a professional therapeutic process that involves guiding individuals through emotional, psychological, and interpersonal difficulties. It provides a safe, confidential space where clients can explore their feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, often helping them develop coping strategies and solutions to problems. Counseling can address a wide range of issues, including trauma, stress,

and relationship difficulties, and is tailored to meet individual needs (Chen, 2023). It is particularly valuable for survivors of domestic violence and child abuse, as it offers support, empowerment, and tools for emotional healing and recovery. Counseling plays an important role in addressing domestic violence and child abuse by providing therapeutic interventions, emotional support, and tools for survivors to regain control of their lives (Sonkin & Liebert, 2003).

* **Corresponding Author:** Adaobi Jennifer Iloakasia, jenniferadaobiiloakasia@gmail.com

Department of Educational Psychology Guidance and Counselling, Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe Anambra State, Nigeria
 Address: No. 1 college road, Abata, Nsugbe 432108, Anambra, Nigeria

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Domestic violence refers to a pattern of abusive behaviors in a relationship used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over the other. It includes physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, and financial abuse. Domestic violence affects individuals regardless of gender, age, or socioeconomic background, leading to long-term physical and psychological harm (Igbolekwu et al, 2021). Survivors often experience anxiety, depression, and trauma, and may find it difficult to leave abusive situations due to fear or dependency. Counseling plays a critical role in helping survivors of domestic violence rebuild their lives and regain emotional stability. Domestic violence and child abuse are pervasive issues globally, impacting the emotional, psychological, and physical well-being of victims (Jadovich et al, 2024). The role of counseling is to mitigate these effects through structured interventions that focus on healing and recovery (McNally et al., 2003; Alghazo & Premuda-Conti, 2024). Counseling also offers a safe space for victims of child abuse to express their emotions and process their experiences (Pond et al., 2023).

Child abuse involves any form of maltreatment directed at a child by a parent, caregiver, or another adult, including physical, emotional, sexual abuse, or neglect. It often leads to profound psychological trauma, affecting the child's development, self-esteem, and future relationships (Dickson et al, 2024). Children exposed to abuse may experience long-term mental health issues, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and behavioral problems. Counseling provides an important intervention in helping children recover from abuse, offering a safe space for emotional expression and fostering resilience. Counseling also aids in identifying and breaking the cycle of abuse early. Research suggests that survivors of domestic violence often struggle with trauma, anxiety, and depression (Diriwari, 2023). Therapists trained in trauma-informed approaches can help these individuals process their experiences and develop coping mechanisms. According to Edeh et al, (2022), traumafocused cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT) has proven effective in treating children and adults who have experienced abuse, offering strategies to manage emotional dysregulation and post-traumatic stress symptoms. The integration of counseling into domestic violence support services is pivotal in enabling victims to develop resilience and heal from the psychological wounds inflicted by abuse (Edeh et al, 2022).

Counseling also functions as a vital form of emotional support, providing a consistent and empathetic presence that victims often lack in their abusive environments. In contrast to other interventions, counseling allows for deeper emotional exploration and long-term relationship building between the counselor and the client. According to Kerker & Adeyongo (2024), the therapeutic relationship in counseling is key to empowering victims to reclaim their sense of self-worth and agency. This finding aligns with

studies showing that when survivors receive emotional validation and support, they are more likely to pursue further help and establish personal safety plans (Chukwu et al, 2019). Additionally, counselors often serve as advocates, connecting clients with legal and social services that can help them escape abusive environments and ensure their protection (Reisenhofer & Taft, 2013).

Counseling in the context of child abuse often involves school counselors, who are well-positioned to identify signs of abuse and intervene early. In a related study, Udenigwe (2023) found that school-based counseling programs could significantly reduce the incidence of child abuse by providing students with a confidential space to report their concerns. Counselors also educate children on recognizing abusive behaviors and understanding their rights, contributing to prevention efforts. Furthermore, school counselors collaborate with child protective services to ensure abused children receive comprehensive care, which includes psychological support and legal intervention (Yaya et al, 2019).

Counseling plays an important role in the recovery process of victims of domestic violence and child abuse. Through various therapeutic approaches, counseling can help victims process trauma, rebuild self-confidence, and find strategies to deal with emotional and practical challenges. Counseling also serves as a bridge to connect victims with other support services, such as legal protection, medical assistance, or social rehabilitation. However, the implementation of counseling faces various challenges, including social stigma, limited access to professional services, and a lack of understanding of the importance of psychological support in the recovery process. Therefore, this research is important to explore how counseling can have a significant impact in dealing with victims of domestic and child violence and identify strategies to improve counseling services in various contexts. Counseling is also essential in breaking the cycle of abuse, both for survivors and perpetrators. Research by Tran et al (2021) shows that counseling can aid perpetrators of domestic violence in addressing the underlying emotional or behavioral issues that contribute to abusive behaviors. Through behavioral interventions such as anger management and emotional regulation, counseling has the potential to reduce the recurrence of violence within households. This approach aligns with family systems theory, which emphasizes the need to treat both the victim and the abuser to disrupt the cycle of violence (Oyeleye & Ademosu, 2023).

This study is essential considering the increasing prevalence of domestic violence and child abuse issues and their profound impact on mental and physical well-being. Globally, domestic violence affects one in three women, while millions of children suffer from abuse annually (Elemile et al, 2023). Despite various legal and social interventions, the psychological trauma inflicted on victims

often goes unaddressed, underscoring the need for effective counseling interventions. Several studies highlight the gaps in support systems for survivors. For instance, Hassan et al (2024) point out that while shelters and legal protections exist, many victims lack access to trauma-informed counseling, which is essential for long-term healing. Furthermore, Wichmann et al (2023) emphasize that school-based counseling for child abuse victims is often underfunded, leading to inadequate psychological care for affected children. These gaps indicate an urgent need for research to establish counseling as a core component of domestic violence and child abuse interventions.

1.1 Research Questions

This research question focuses on three questions including: (1) How does counseling help victims of domestic violence and child abuse overcome psychological trauma?; (2) What is the impact of counseling on preventing domestic violence and child abuse in at-risk families?; (3) What challenges do counselors face in providing effective interventions for domestic violence and child abuse cases?

1.2 Hypotheses

This study is based on the following null hypotheses, including (1) There is no significant difference in the perception of teacher counsellors regarding the levels of psychological trauma among victims of domestic violence and child abuse; (2) Counseling has no significant effect on the rates of domestic violence and child abuse in at-risk families; (3) There are no significant differences in the challenges faced by counselors across different location when providing interventions for domestic violence and child abuse cases.

The purpose of this study is to examine how counseling can help victims of domestic violence and violence against children in the process of physical, emotional, and psychological healing.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive survey research design. The research was conducted in urban and rural institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria.

2.2 Research Object

The population comprised professional and teacher counselors in tertiary and secondary schools within Anambra State. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select participants. The sample included

98 teacher and professional counselors, ensuring representation across different demographic groups and educational institutions.

2.3 Data Collection

Data were collected using structured questionnaires. The instruments were validated through expert reviews and a pilot study. Experts in psychology and education evaluated the relevance and clarity of the items, leading to necessary adjustments before the main data collection. The reliability of the questionnaires was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.77, indicating high internal consistency. Data collection was conducted over a six-week period. Questionnaires were administered online to ensure accessibility.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis method employed for the research questions involved a two-step approach, beginning with descriptive statistics to summarize key characteristics of the data set. This included calculating the mean, which indicates the average value, and the standard deviation, which measures the variability around the mean. To enhance the accuracy of these estimates, bootstrapping was used, allowing for the assessment of bias and standard error, as well as providing a 95% confidence interval that indicates where the true population parameter likely lies. Following the descriptive analysis, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was conducted to test the hypothesis regarding differences in challenges faced by counselors across various groups. This involved calculating the sum of squares, which distinguishes between variability due to differences in group means (between groups) and variability within individual groups (within groups). Mean squares were computed, and the F-statistic was derived to evaluate the significance of the differences among group means. A p_value below 0.05 indicate statistically significant differences.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

To provide a comprehensive overview of the sample characteristics, demographic information was collected across three key variables: marital status, residential location, and age range (N = 98). The frequency and percentage distributions for these demographic characteristics are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Breakdown by Marital Status, Location, and Age Range

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Marital Status	Married	67	68.4%	68.4%	68.4%

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Location	Single	21	21.4%	21.4%	89.8%
	Divorced/Widowed	10	10.2%	10.2%	100.0%
	Total	98	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Urban	72	73.5%	73.5%	73.5%
	Rural	26	26.5%	26.5%	100.0%
Age Range	Total	98	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	25 – 30 years	8	8.2%	8.2%	8.2%
	31 – 40 years	34	34.7%	34.7%	42.9%
	41 – 55 years	39	39.8%	39.8%	82.7%
	56 – 65 years	17	17.3%	17.3%	100.0%
	Total	98	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As shown in Table 1, the sample was predominantly composed of married individuals (n = 67, 68.4%), with single respondents comprising 21.4% (n = 21) and the remainder identifying as divorced or widowed (n = 10, 10.2%). In terms of geographic distribution, nearly three-quarters of the participants resided in urban areas (n = 72, 73.5%), whereas 26.5% (n = 26) lived in rural settings. Regarding age distribution, the sample was largely represented by mature adult cohorts, with the largest proportion falling into the 41–55 age bracket (n = 39, 39.8%), followed closely by the 31–40 age group (n = 34, 34.7%), while participants aged 56–65 and 25–30 accounted for 17.3% (n = 17) and 8.2% (n = 8) of the total sample, respectively.

3.1.1 Research question 1: How does counseling help victims of domestic violence and child abuse overcome psychological trauma?

To address Research Question 1 regarding how counseling facilitates psychological trauma recovery among victims of domestic violence and child abuse, a descriptive statistical analysis paired with a 1,000-sample bootstrap procedure was conducted (N = 98). The bootstrap estimates, standard errors, and 95% confidence intervals across all seven recovery dimensions are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics with Bootstrap Analysis for Counseling Impact on Victims' Emotional Recovery

			Bootstrap ^a			
			95% Confidence Interval			
		Statistic	Bias	Std. Error	Lower	Upper
Counseling helps victims process emotional trauma and build resilience.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	1.96	.01	.13	1.70	2.22
	Std. Deviation	1.308	-.006	.057	1.171	1.394
Victims learn coping strategies to manage overwhelming emotional responses.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	2.92	.00	.09	2.74	3.09
	Std. Deviation	.870	-.005	.033	.799	.934
Counseling provides emotional healing by addressing underlying psychological issues.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	2.88	.00	.10	2.67	3.07
	Std. Deviation	1.018	-.006	.055	.905	1.120
Counseling supports rebuilding self-esteem and trust in abusive environments.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	2.95	.00	.09	2.78	3.12
	Std. Deviation	.842	-.004	.035	.767	.911
Counselors guide victims through trauma recovery and emotional stabilization processes.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	2.06	.00	.12	1.84	2.31
	Std. Deviation	1.225	-.006	.046	1.122	1.308
Therapeutic interventions promote emotional regulation and healthier coping mechanisms.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	2.87	.00	.08	2.71	3.02
	Std. Deviation	.782	-.008	.068	.627	.900
Counseling helps victims recognize and break destructive behavioral patterns.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	2.99	.00	.09	2.80	3.18
	Std. Deviation	.936	-.006	.054	.823	1.029
Valid N (listwise)	N	98	0	0	98	98

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples

The descriptive statistics and bootstrap analysis for counseling’s impact on victims’ emotional recovery in Table 2 show that counseling significantly helps victims process trauma, build resilience, and develop healthier coping mechanisms. For instance, the mean score for victims learning coping strategies is relatively high (2.92), with a 95% confidence interval of 2.74 to 3.09. Counseling also plays a role in rebuilding self-esteem (mean = 2.95), with a confidence interval of 2.78 to 3.12. Victims also benefit from emotional healing through therapeutic interventions (mean = 2.88), and counseling aids in recognizing destructive patterns (mean = 2.99), all supported by stable standard deviations.

3.1.2 Research question 2: What is the impact of counseling on preventing domestic violence and child abuse in at-risk families?

To address Research Question 2 regarding the impact of counseling on preventing domestic violence and child abuse in at-risk families, descriptive statistics combined with a 1,000-sample bootstrap procedure were computed (N = 98). The observed means, standard deviations, bootstrap standard errors, and 95% confidence intervals across the seven preventive indicators are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for the Impact of Counseling on Preventing Domestic Violence and Child Abuse in At-Risk Families

			Bootstrap ^a			
			95% Confidence Interval			
		Statistic	Bias	Std. Error	Lower	Upper
Early counseling intervention reduces domestic violence risks in families.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	2.78	.00	.10	2.58	2.98
	Std. Deviation	.958	-.004	.048	.865	1.053
Counseling helps identify warning signs of potential abuse early.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	1.65	.00	.12	1.44	1.89
	Std. Deviation	1.132	-.006	.081	.952	1.270
Family counseling promotes healthier communication and conflict resolution strategies.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	2.90	.00	.10	2.70	3.08
	Std. Deviation	.936	-.004	.056	.819	1.034
Trained counselors assist in breaking the cycle of abuse.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	3.10	.00	.11	2.89	3.31
	Std. Deviation	.990	-.007	.052	.878	1.082
Counseling fosters resilience in families, reducing domestic violence occurrence.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	3.01	.00	.09	2.82	3.18
	Std. Deviation	.914	-.008	.065	.773	1.028
Regular counseling sessions mitigate escalation of domestic violence situations.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	2.83	.00	.10	2.62	3.01
	Std. Deviation	.931	-.005	.048	.835	1.015
Counseling builds awareness in families about child abuse prevention strategies.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	3.27	.00	.10	3.06	3.44
	Std. Deviation	.914	-.004	.063	.775	1.029
Valid N (listwise)	N	98	0	0	98	98

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples

The descriptive statistics in Table 3 shows significant positive effects. Early counseling intervention helps reduce the risk of domestic violence, with a mean score of 2.78 and a confidence interval between 2.58 and 2.98. Counseling is also effective in promoting healthier communication and conflict resolution within families (mean = 2.90). Additionally, counseling fosters resilience, reducing the occurrence of domestic violence (mean = 3.01). Notably, trained counselors play a critical role in breaking the cycle of abuse (mean = 3.10), while family awareness of child abuse prevention strategies improves through regular counseling (mean = 3.27). These findings highlight

counseling’s importance in early intervention and prevention.

3.1.3 Research question 3: What challenges do counselors face in providing effective interventions for domestic violence and child abuse cases?

To evaluate Research Question 3 concerning the challenges faced by counselors in delivering effective interventions for domestic violence and child abuse cases, descriptive statistics along with a 1,000-sample bootstrap analysis were performed (N = 98). The observed means, standard deviations, bootstrap biases, standard errors,

and corresponding 95% confidence intervals across the seven identified challenge dimensions are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics on Challenges Faced by Counselors in Providing Effective Interventions for Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Cases

					Bootstrap ^a	
					95% Confidence Interval	
		Statistic	Bias	Std. Error	Lower	Upper
Cultural stigmas may hinder victims from seeking needed counseling support.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	3.10	.00	.10	2.91	3.29
	Std. Deviation	.990	-.007	.053	.878	1.084
Lack of proper training affects counselors' ability to intervene effectively.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	3.14	.00	.10	2.94	3.33
	Std. Deviation	1.005	-.006	.063	.875	1.121
Time constraints challenge counselors in providing adequate therapeutic sessions.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	3.36	.00	.09	3.18	3.54
	Std. Deviation	.944	-.009	.083	.772	1.093
Victims' unwillingness to disclose abuse complicates the intervention process.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	3.18	.00	.10	2.98	3.37
	Std. Deviation	1.049	-.006	.056	.928	1.146
Legal limitations restrict counselors from directly intervening in abusive situations.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	1.82	.01	.13	1.58	2.08
	Std. Deviation	1.246	-.006	.070	1.085	1.357
Inadequate collaboration with law enforcement hinders comprehensive intervention efforts.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	2.85	.00	.10	2.65	3.04
	Std. Deviation	.967	-.008	.057	.849	1.070
Funding shortages affect counselors' capacity to provide consistent interventions.	N	98	0	0	98	98
	Mean	2.97	.00	.09	2.80	3.15
	Std. Deviation	.902	-.007	.042	.815	.979
Valid N (listwise)	N	98	0	0	98	98

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples

Table 4 showed that cultural stigmas, which may hinder victims from seeking needed counseling, scored a mean of 3.10 with a confidence interval between 2.91 and 3.29, and a standard deviation of 0.990. Additionally, lack of proper training affects counselors' ability to intervene, with a mean of 3.14 (CI = 2.94–3.33, SD = 1.005). Time constraints emerged as one of the greatest challenges, with a mean of 3.36 (CI = 3.18–3.54, SD = 0.944). Victims' unwillingness to disclose abuse also complicates interventions, reflected by a mean of 3.18 (CI = 2.98–3.37, SD = 1.049). Legal limitations restrict direct intervention, showing a lower mean of 1.82 (CI = 1.58–2.08, SD = 1.246). Inadequate collaboration with law enforcement, another significant barrier, had a mean of 2.85 (CI = 2.65–3.04, SD = 0.967). Finally, funding shortages that limit consistent

interventions were noted with a mean of 2.97 (CI = 2.80–3.15, SD = 0.902).

3.1.4 Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the perception of teacher counsellors regarding the levels of psychological trauma among victims of domestic violence and child abuse.

To test Hypothesis 1, which posited that there is no significant difference in the perception of teacher counselors regarding the levels of psychological trauma between victims of domestic violence and child abuse, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The statistical summary of the between-group and within-group variances is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. ANOVA Results for Psychological Trauma Levels Among Victims of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.799	1	2.799	7.664	.007
Within Groups	35.059	96	.365		
Total	37.858	97			

The ANOVA results in Table 5 show a significant difference in the perception of teacher counselors regarding psychological trauma levels among victims of domestic violence and child abuse ($F = 7.664, p = .007$). Since the significance value ($p = .007$) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that teacher counselors perceive psychological trauma levels differently among victims, suggesting that there is a significant variation in their assessments.

3.1.5 Hypothesis 2: Counseling has no significant effect on the rates of domestic violence and child abuse in at-risk families.

To test Hypothesis 2, which stated that counseling has no significant effect on the rates of domestic violence and child abuse in at-risk families, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed. The resulting between-groups and within-groups variance estimates are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. ANOVA Results for the rates of domestic violence and child abuse in at-risk families.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.711	1	.711	1.949	.016
Within Groups	35.012	96	.365		
Total	35.723	97			

The ANOVA results for Hypothesis 2 in Table 6 reveal no significant effect of counseling on the rates of domestic violence and child abuse in at-risk families ($F = 1.949, p = .016$). Although the significance value ($p = .016$) is less than 0.05, indicating a potential effect, the actual differences are minimal (Sum of Squares between groups = .711). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, suggesting that counseling may have an impact on reducing the rates of domestic violence and child abuse

cation when providing interventions for domestic violence and child abuse cases.

To test Hypothesis 3, which posited that there are no significant differences in the challenges faced by counselors across different geographic locations when providing interventions for domestic violence and child abuse cases, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The breakdown of between-groups and within-groups variance is presented in Table 7.

3.1.6 Hypothesis 3: There are no significant differences in the challenges faced by counselors across different lo-

Table 7. ANOVA Results for differences in the challenges faced by counselors across different location

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.658	1	2.658	5.215	.025
Within Groups	48.931	96	.510		
Total	51.589	97			

The ANOVA results for Hypothesis 3 in Table 7 indicate significant differences in the challenges faced by counselors in different locations when providing interventions for domestic violence and child abuse cases ($F = 5.215, p = .025$). Since the significance value ($p = .025$) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This suggests that counselors encounter varying challenges based on their location, highlighting the importance of tailoring interventions to address these location-specific issues effectively.

3.2. Discussion

Counseling plays a vital role in helping victims of domestic violence and child abuse overcome psychological trauma. Victims learn coping strategies to manage overwhelming emotional responses, which aligns with findings from a recent study by Jadovich et al (2024), who empha-

size the importance of skill-building in recovery. In contrast, Chen (2023) notes that counseling provides emotional healing by addressing underlying psychological issues, highlighting its essential role in facilitating recovery. Additionally, counseling supports the rebuilding of self-esteem and trust in abusive environments. This finding agrees with the work of DeAtley & Stewart (2024), who found that effective counseling fosters resilience among survivors. Furthermore, therapeutic interventions promote emotional regulation and healthier coping mechanisms, an important aspect identified by Ogbodo et al (2023), suggesting that structured support systems significantly improve emotional health outcomes. Counseling helps victims recognize and break destructive behavioral patterns, reinforcing the notion that therapeutic engagement is essential for long-term recovery. In a related study, Chen (2023) highlights how targeted interventions can

help individuals reframe their experiences and develop healthier relationship dynamics.

Counseling significantly impacts the prevention of domestic violence and child abuse in at-risk families. Early counseling interventions reduce domestic violence risks, a finding supported by Ifayomi et al (2024), who emphasizes proactive measures in lowering abuse incidents. In contrast, Kerker & Adeyongo (2024) highlights that family counseling promotes healthier communication and conflict resolution strategies, which are essential for fostering a safe home environment. Trained counselors assist in breaking the cycle of abuse, an assertion that aligns with Meinck et al (2023), who found that effective counseling techniques can interrupt generational patterns of violence. Furthermore, counseling fosters resilience in families, thereby reducing domestic violence occurrences, echoing findings from Chukwu et al (2019), who observed that families who engage in counseling develop stronger coping mechanisms. Regular counseling sessions also mitigate the escalation of domestic violence situations, as noted by Ebeh (2024), who indicates that ongoing support helps families manage conflicts before they intensify. Additionally, counseling builds awareness in families about child abuse prevention strategies, reinforcing the importance of education in safeguarding children (Harding et al., 2019)..

Counselors face numerous challenges when providing effective interventions for domestic violence and child abuse cases. Cultural stigmas may hinder victims from seeking necessary counseling support, a finding that aligns with studies by Udenigwe (2023), who notes that societal norms often prevent individuals from accessing help. In contrast, Yaya et al (2019) emphasizes that a lack of proper training affects counselors' ability to intervene effectively, indicating that specialized knowledge is important for successful outcomes. Time constraints present another significant challenge, as indicated by Tran et al (2021), who found that limited session availability often compromises the quality of care provided. Additionally, victims' unwillingness to disclose abuse complicates the intervention process, supporting the work of Oyeleye & Ademosu (2023), who emphasizes the importance of establishing trust for effective communication. Furthermore, inadequate collaboration with law enforcement hinders comprehensive intervention efforts, echoing Hassan et al (2024) assertion that strong partnerships are vital for holistic support. Funding shortages affect counselors' capacity to provide consistent interventions, as reported by Ovi (2024), highlighting the need for sustainable resources. This suggests that counselors encounter varying challenges based on their location, emphasizing the importance of tailoring interventions to effectively address these location-specific issues.

This study is in line with previous research showing that counseling is an effective intervention in helping vic-

tims of domestic and child violence. Previous studies have shown that psychotherapeutic approaches, such as trauma therapy and strength-based counseling, can help victims process trauma and improve their psychological well-being. The results of this study support findings that highlight the importance of counseling in facilitating the long-term recovery of domestic violence victims. In addition to supporting research results that highlight the effectiveness of counseling, this study also aligns with studies that identify challenges in implementing counseling services, such as stigma, lack of access, and shortage of trained professionals. This reinforces the urgency to improve the counseling service system, as proposed in previous studies.

This research addresses the globally relevant issues of domestic violence and child abuse. With increasing public awareness of the impact of domestic violence, this research makes an important contribution to understanding the role of counseling as a key intervention to help victims. The research integrates various perspectives, including psychology, law, and social policy, to provide a holistic view of how counseling can support victims. This approach allows the research to provide more comprehensive and applicable insights. By analyzing various counseling approaches from diverse regions or cultures, the research provides insights that can be adapted to local contexts, enabling their use in communities with unique needs.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1. Implications

This research has important implications in strengthening recovery strategies for victims of domestic and child abuse, assisting their social and emotional recovery, and reducing the cycle of violence in society. It can also encourage the government and social organizations to provide more counseling services for victims of domestic violence and child abuse.

4.2. Contribution

This research contributes to the development of theories about trauma and recovery, particularly related to the impact of domestic violence and violence against children. The findings can deepen academic understanding of the factors that support the recovery of victims of violent trauma. As well as provide guidance for counselors and social workers on the specific skills and techniques needed in handling cases of domestic violence and violence against children.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

5.1 Limitations

Collecting data from victims of violence requires strict ethical considerations, especially due to the risk of traumatization. Researchers must be careful not to inflict additional stress on victims when they are asked to recall painful experiences. These limitations need to be taken into account so that the resulting recommendations are not only adapted to the context of the study, but can also be applied more carefully to a wider population, taking into account relevant social, cultural, and economic variables.

5.2 Recommendations for Future Research Directions

This study recommends a longitudinal study that can evaluate the long-term impact of counseling for victims of domestic violence and child victims of violence, so as to provide a more complete picture of the sustainability of counseling outcomes. It is also recommended to develop counseling programs that specifically address trauma due to violence, such as trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT) for child victims of violence and trauma oriented counseling for victims of domestic violence. This approach allows for more in-depth psychological recovery for victims.

6. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the critical role of counseling in addressing domestic violence and child abuse. The findings demonstrate that effective counseling interventions not only help victims manage psychological trauma but also significantly reduce the rates of domestic violence and child abuse in at-risk families. However, it is essential to acknowledge the challenges counselors face, including cultural stigmas, inadequate training, and resource limitations, which can hinder the effectiveness of interventions. Therefore, addressing these challenges through enhanced training, better funding, and improved collaboration with law enforcement is vital for optimizing counseling services. Ultimately, investing in comprehensive counseling programs can create safer environments for victims and their families, highlighting the need for ongoing research and policy support to strengthen these important services in our communities.

The study also found challenges like social stigma, limited resources, and lack of access to quality counseling services. Therefore, a systemic approach is needed, including counselor training, improved service facilities, and policy support to ensure long-term effectiveness. Through counseling, victims are empowered to make informed decisions regarding their lives. This includes building strategies to deal with violent situations, seeking legal assis-

tance, and developing the necessary life skills to become independent.

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CRedit Authorship Contribution Statement

The author declares that this article's entire research and writing process was carried out independently. The author is fully responsible for all data related to this research. No other party has participated as an author or made a significant contribution to the content of this work.

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The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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The author declares that this study was conducted in accordance with research ethics principles and has received ethical approval from the author's institution, including respect for participants' autonomy, confidentiality of data, and ensuring their safety and well-being, as outlined in the applicable research ethics guidelines.

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