

Resource Theory and Family Violence: Exploring the Views and Opinions of Undergraduate Students from a Ghanaian University

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ABSTRACT

The resource theory posits that in human relationships, the individuals within that relationship who possess or have access to the most needed or desired resource tend to be the most powerful and influential. This study investigates the relationship between the resource theory and family violence. Here, family violence is defined as any act or actions among family members which is intended to cause pain or harm to an individual or individuals within that family set-up. The study sought to establish the respondents' understanding of resource theory and family violence as well as their understanding of how resource theory can contribute to family violence. The study also sought to establish the respondents' experience with family violence and whether their experience can be traced to or associated with the resource theory. The study employed a descriptive research design involving ninety (90) randomly selected undergraduate students from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the University of Cape Coast Ghana. Data was collected using a self-administered semi-structured questionnaire with twenty-four (24) questions. Data was subsequently analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0, and the results were presented using inferential statistics. The analysis found that most respondents (62%) understood the concept of family violence. Additionally, most respondents (61%) understood the resource theory. Most students (49%) agreed that, in practice, the resource theory creates a power imbalance among family members, which may lead to violence or the use of force and aggression within the family unit. The results also established that (i) there is a statistically significant relationship between resource theory and power imbalance and (ii) there is a statistically significant relationship between resource-related power imbalance and family violence. The respondents agreed that the resource theory is a significant tool for explaining and understanding family violence. This study concluded that the relationship between the two is shaped by culture, socioeconomic status, and individual experiences. Therefore, the study emphasised the need for context-sensitive approaches and the intersection between the resource theory and other frameworks, such as the feminist and social learning theories, to understand and address family violence, highlighting the importance of reducing resource inequalities and power imbalances within households and family units.

Keywords: Household, Family Violence, Power Imbalance, Resource Theory

1. INTRODUCTION

Family violence, like all other forms of violence, is a pervasive public health problem that is destructive to millions of families all over the globe, with profound implications for the social, economic, and psychological well-being of individuals. Kurmanbeva et al. (2023) describe family violence as not just a minor problem but a major public health disease that impacts millions of women around the globe. Family violence takes a toll on the general health and well-being as well as the independence of victims (Meyer et al., 2019). Family violence has been referred to as all forms of threatening behaviours within families that may be economical, sexual, psychological, or physical and may include intimate partner violence and child abuse (Peterman et al., 2020; Van Gelder et al., 2020). Actions which constitute family violence are intentionally (or unintentionally) carried out to cause pain, harm, lack, or suffering. For some perpetrators, their behaviour is intended to take revenge, teach their victims some lessons, or as a means of discipline, especially in the case of younger victims or children and their parents.

Worldwide, the incidence of family violence cases is on the increase. One global research conducted by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) established that an estimated 30% of women around the world have experienced some form of family violence on at least one occasion (World Health Organization, 2021a). Further, the continental research by Yoshihama et al. (2020) revealed that 55% of women living in Asia had been abused by an intimate partner at least on one occasion in their lifetime. In recent times, scholars such as Ofosu-Koranteng (2023) and Usta et al. (2021) have indicated that certain conditions, such as the COVID-19 lockdowns and the attendant social isolation measures aimed at curbing the spread of the virus, resulted in an increasing number of women experiencing all forms of family violence including sexual, physical, emotional, and psychological, especially at the hands of their intimate partners.

Although these figures are based on scientific research, it has to be noted that no number or percentage can give a true reflection of the global scale of family violence because half of the women who have experienced family violence never tell anyone (Kurmanbekova et al., 2023) for reasons such as culture and societal expectations (Ofosu-Koranteng, 2023). Thus, the reported data represent only a fraction of the realities on the ground.

One framework that has gained prominence among researchers in providing an understanding of the study of family violence is the resource theory. First promulgated by Foa (1971), the resource theory is a social psychological framework that provides insights into how disproportions in access, ownership and control over resources dictate the power dynamics in all relationships and social interactions between people in everyday life. The resource theory is based on the belief that humans rarely satisfy their psychological and social needs in isolation and that social interactions and relationships are how people acquire the necessary resources, such as status, love, and money, from other humans (Foa et al., 1993). Foa et al. (1993) also point out that among individuals in a relationship, the one with the greatest or most needed resource tends to be the most powerful or influential; hence, resources largely determine the power dynamics in relationships. Resource theorists and researchers agree that, in some instances, violent acts can result from the disproportionate distribution of resources between the haves and the have-nots. For example, Goode's (1971) resource theory suggests a direct relationship between wealth and violence. Drawing an analogy from the marriage relationship, Anderson (1997) also notes that a husband with vast resources, such as high income and social standing, can use such resources to control his spouse's behaviour. In the same way, men with limited or no resources may resort to force or violence more quickly as a means of controlling their spouses (Anderson, 1997). This study thus aimed to establish how the distribution of resources within the family structure can contribute to violence.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Researchers have conceptualised resources differently depending on the theoretical perspectives and the context. Within the settings and literature of families, households, and societies, resources are broadly defined as tangible and intangible assets that encompass material possessions and social, cultural, and economic factors that influence individuals' access to agency, opportunities, and control over their lives. Within the context of family violence, however, the resource theory suggests that imbalances in resource distribution create conditions that are conducive to perpetuating abusive behaviour. Some scholars propose that the resource theory regards the family as a power system where men with fewer resources may use violence as a strategy to maintain their dominance (Vyas & Watts, 2009), and women with fewer resources are more at risk and likely to be victims of family violence (Goode, 1971). A more recent scholarship on the subject argues that the women's empowerment movement, from which many women have become economically empowered, has reduced their vulnerability to family violence and has given women an equal voice with their male counterparts within the family unit. Nevertheless, some scholars explain that an increase in women's resources may yield a higher risk of abuse or violence backlash (True, 2012; Cools & Kotsadam, 2017). Based on the points raised by these scholars, this study posits that the relationship between the resource theory and whether resource theory genuinely leads to family violence is still a continuing discussion and a major source of research in current scholarly discourse. It is against this background that this current study is prompted to map out the relationship between the resource theory and family violence by determining how aggression, abuse, and other forms of violence in families can be linked to the disproportions or inequality in resource access, ownership, and control. The study focused on students enrolled in their third and fourth years at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Cape Coast for the 2024/2025 academic year.

1.2 Research Objectives

The following objectives guided the study:

- i. To establish the study respondents' understanding of family violence and resource theory
- ii. To examine the perception of study respondents on the relationship between family violence and the resource theory
- iii. To ascertain the study respondents' personal experience with family violence emanating from the resource theory

1.3 Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis also guided the study.

H_{01} : There is no statistically significant relationship between the resource theory and power imbalance in families

H_{02} : There is no statistically significant relationship between the resource theory and family violence.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Resource Theory

Theoretically, Jasinski (2001) posits that access to and use of power is at the heart of the resource theory. Thus, within the concept of family violence, the resource theory suggests that violence is likely to be used by males against their female intimate partners as a means to express power and exercise control if there is an apparent imbalance in access and control over key resources such as prestige, income and educational attainment (Basile et al., 2013).

First promulgated by Foa in 1971, the resource theory is a social psychological framework for understanding the relationships and social interactions between individuals in everyday life (Choo, 2009). Proponents of the theory argue that resources are critical in shaping power dynamics, decision-making processes, and members' overall well-being within relationships, families, and households (Quark, 2011). The resource theory is also based on the notion that when dominant sex roles and expectations are unmet due to unequal access to resources, especially in favour of the female partner, then male partners are more likely to resort to the use of violence as a means of exerting power and control over their female partners (Gelles, 2007). Various researchers and resource theorists express these ideas and reveal some central tenets and concepts relevant to understanding and applying resource theory to family violence.

First, the resource theory reveals a prominent linkage between resources and power within interpersonal relations in general, but more specifically among persons who depend on each other for key survival resources, such as those between families and other intimate relationships. Such key resources may include emotional support, financial assistance, social standing, information, tangible items, products, and consumables. Second, the theory shows a relationship between wealth and violence in that, according to Goode (1971), the resource theory suggests that force and violence are resources that can be employed to resolve conflicts. However, in recent times, the two have been used as a last resort.

Thirdly, resource theory shows that unequal resource distribution among family or household members can lead to a power differential within those relationships and families. When one individual possesses more resources than the other, the individual with the greater resource may use their advantage to exert control, manipulate or exploit the less resourced partner (Thomas, 2022). This power imbalance can contribute significantly to various forms of family violence, such as intimate partner violence and child or elder abuse (Thomas, 2022). Additionally, resource theorists maintain that the availability and accessibility of resources can influence an individual's ability to escape abusive situations or seek help. Limited resources, including financial means, social support networks or legal protections, can trap victims in abusive relationships and perpetuate cycles of violence. The challenges victims face are compounded by economic dependency, lack of affordable housing, inadequate social services, and societal norms that condone or tolerate violence.

In its earliest conception, the resource theory suggested that within the domestic or family setting, members who possessed more economic and financial resources also had access to the use of force, aggression, or violence (Allen & Straus, 1980). However, those family members identified as having the most access also had the least incentive to apply violence to gain compliance from other family members (Goode, 1971). Thus, according to (De Coster & Heimer, 2021), this viewpoint suggests that a family member who desires power or control within the family but has a job low in income and prestige may resort to violence to establish and maintain control in the family, hence the term family violence. Here, the paper acknowledges that while resource theory offers valuable insights into the relationship between resources and family violence, it is essential to note that family violence is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple factors, including sociocultural, psychological, and individual characteristics and can present in different forms such as financial, emotional, sexual, physical, social and spiritual abuse as shown in Figure 1.

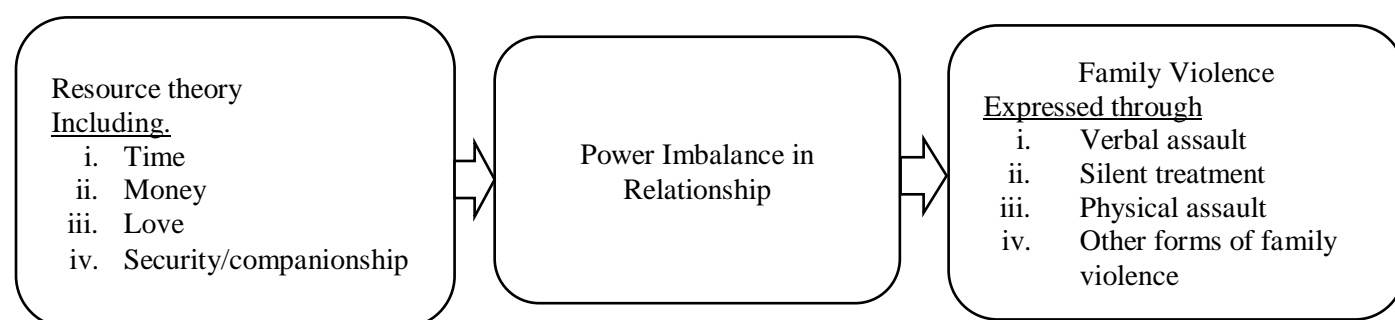


Figure 1

The Relationships between the Resource Theory and the Concept of Family Violence

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Understanding Family Violence and Resource Theory

According to Ayalon et al. (2016), family violence, sometimes referred to as domestic violence, is a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm and distress. Taking a cue from the definition by Ayalon et al. (2016), scholars such as Southern and Sullivan (2021) note that family violence can thus span incidents from infancy to old age involving boundary violations occurring within intimate relationships, family systems, and cultural contexts. Based on these definitions, this study thus takes the stance that family violence can be understood as a systemic issue that evolves and manifests in individuals and relationships over time. Some of the major forms of family violence, such as child maltreatment and adult or relational violence, can be attributed to cultural and contextual factors. For instance, Ofosu-Koranteng and Mensah (2024) have attributed the occurrence of family violence among married couples to the payment of the bride price. This cultural practice is integral to marital transactions in sub-Saharan Africa and some Southeastern Asia. Additionally, Southern and Sullivan (2021) have linked family violence to the accumulation of a series of stressors that may occur over the lifespan of individuals, especially among the survivors of family violence. Ofosu-Koranteng (2023) has also intimated that the occurrence of unpredictable events, such as pandemics and their attendant social isolation, as was witnessed during the COVID-19 lockdown, may create avenues for perpetrators and victims of family violence to come together, a situation which may exacerbate the occurrence of family violence.

2.2.2 Public Knowledge and Perception of Family Violence

Examining the general public's knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions about resource-related family violence is crucial as an awareness of the prevailing societal perceptions about the complex epidemic can guide targeted interventions. Indeed, some scholars have reported in their research findings increased public awareness about violence against women in general but also, more specifically, violence that occurs in families and intimate relationships, such as family violence. For instance, the National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women survey conducted in Australia revealed that public awareness of violence against women among Australians has generally risen (Diemer et al., 2018). Additionally, the Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated a domestic violence abuse prevalence rate of approximately 5% among adults in the year ending March 2021 (Elkin, 2021). In another study investigating public awareness, prevailing attitudes, and perceptions towards domestic violence and abuse in the United Kingdom, Sivarajasingam et al. (2022) found that the study respondents' awareness of family violence may have increased somewhat due to the broad publicity given the subject during the global COVID-19 lockdowns.

Based on the findings of existing literature discussed so far, this paper deduces that the general public is gradually becoming more aware of the occurrence of family violence. However, this awareness may be occurring at a slow pace. That notwithstanding, existing literature also debates these figures, suggesting that many more have refused to discuss the issue of family violence and continue to pretend or deny its occurrence due to factors such as stigmatisation, fear of reprisal, the financial burden, and the unavailability or inadequate support systems (Sivarajasingam, 2022). Hence, these figures may represent only a fraction of the actual occurrence and perpetuation of family violence.

2.2.3 Public Perception of the Relationship between Resources and Family Violence

Researchers such as Jewkes (2002) have argued that resources offer protection and empowerment against violence, at least at the individual level for men and women. However, some scholars have also found that for women living in patriarchal societies, access to more resources such as education, employment and social networks may not necessarily be accompanied by their empowerment and expanded freedoms. Indeed, some scholars have found that at the individual level, access to increased and improved resources for women may result in aggressive backlash from their intimate partners or spouses and other men who control and benefit from the woman's lack of resources. Eswaran and Malhotra (2011) note that as women become more resourceful, men may resort to violence for instrumental reasons, both to counteract the increased power gained by women in order to reinstate their dominance. In patriarchal societies, cultural expectations that emphasise women's dependence on their spouses may curtail their autonomy (Paul, 2016). However, in more gender-egalitarian societies, researchers have found that women's employment and education are significant deterrents (Bowlus & Seitz, 2006).

2.2.4 Resource-Related Family Violence

Researchers have argued that family violence occurs for several reasons, including personality traits such as lack of self-esteem, mental health problems and stress in the home or work environment (Sivarajasingam, 2022).

However, within the context of family violence, victims experience violence mainly in attempts to access resources of different kinds, such as financial assistance, love, and social support from those close to them, such as spouses, partners, parents or guardians.

For instance, in Ghana, Addae and Tang (2021) report that the most common types of family violence perpetuated against adolescents are physical violence, psychological violence, and exposure to Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), and the perpetrators include biological parents, step-parents, extended relatives, and guardians who are not blood-related to the adolescent. The causes of these violent acts are mainly resource-related, including the adolescents' request for financial assistance (such as school fees and pocket money) and inappropriate shelter and sleeping arrangements among different sexes within the family or household, which contributed to sexual violence (Addae & Tang, 2021).

This paper, therefore, posits that parents, guardians, and other individuals who have oversight responsibility over their adult children and are the main providers of virtually every resource these adolescents need hold absolute control and power over their adult children. The misapplication of this power, either as a means of discipline or any other negative way, results in the type of abuse rooted in the fact that the more powerful family member possesses a resource that the less powerful members require to improve their lives or survive. This gives the parent, spouse or the other individual more power over the others, and the negative use of this power may result in family violence.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design, with data gathered using a survey approach. The design was chosen because it is appropriate for tracking and studying human behaviour. The decision to use a survey was also guided by its suitability for research focusing on individuals as the primary unit of analysis. Additionally, surveys effectively assess personal attitudes and characteristics (Obisesan, 2013).

3.2 Target Population

The target population for this study comprised ninety (90) undergraduate students from the University of Cape Coast's Department of Sociology and Anthropology. These participants were mainly third- and fourth-year students duly registered for the 2024/25 academic year at the time of the study.

3.3 Data Collection, Analysis and Presentation

Data was collected using a self-administered structured questionnaire. The instrument consisted of twenty-four (24) questions, including relevant demographic characteristics of the study respondents. The instruments obtained from respondents showed their understanding of the resource theory and family violence. The respondents' perception of the relationship between the response theory and their personal experiences was also gathered using the instrument. Other data collected were respondents' experiences with family violence and the role of resource and power imbalance in family violence. Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0, and the results were presented using inferential statistics.

3.4 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The study's participants were undergraduate students from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Cape Coast. The selection criteria also included students who had completed at least two years of undergraduate study at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and were duly registered for the 2024/2025 academic year at the time of the study. This criterion was to ensure that students who participated were familiar with and understood the main concepts of this study, namely resource theory and family violence, since these concepts are taught to students in the second year of their study at the Department of Sociology. Students who had done two academic years but had not registered for the third year of study at the time of the study were excluded.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Study Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the study participants were gathered, and the results are presented below.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Study Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-21	16	18
22-25	64	71
26-29	10	11
Total	90	100
Sex		
Females	56	62.2
Males	34	37.8
Total	90	100

Table one presents information on the demographic characteristics of the study participants. The findings revealed a gender distribution of 56 females, representing 62.2% of respondents, and 34 males, representing 37.8% of the respondents. A total of 64 individuals, representing 71% of the study participants, were 22-25 years old. Again, 16 students, representing 18% of the total study respondents, were aged 18-21 years, while 10 participants, representing 11%, were within the 26-29 age group.

The mean age of the study participants was found to stand at 23, and a standard deviation of 2.13 years. This study population is skewed in favour of younger adults. The study participants are also fairly homogenous, as most of their ages are within a couple of years of the mean age. These characteristics are very typical and representative of Ghana's general university student population, where most studies focused on university students, revealing the average age of participants to be 23 years, including the work by Oppong and Oti-Boadi (2013), Ameade and Garti (2016) and Ameade et al. (2018).

4.2 Study Respondents' Understanding of Family Violence

Once the demographic characteristics of the study respondents were established, the study sought to understand their understanding of the concept of family violence. Establishing the study respondents' understanding of the subject was important as a major criterion and foundation for soliciting further input for the study. To this end, the respondents were asked to indicate 'Yes' or 'No' to the question, 'Do you understand the concept of family violence?' Responses are shown in Figure 2.

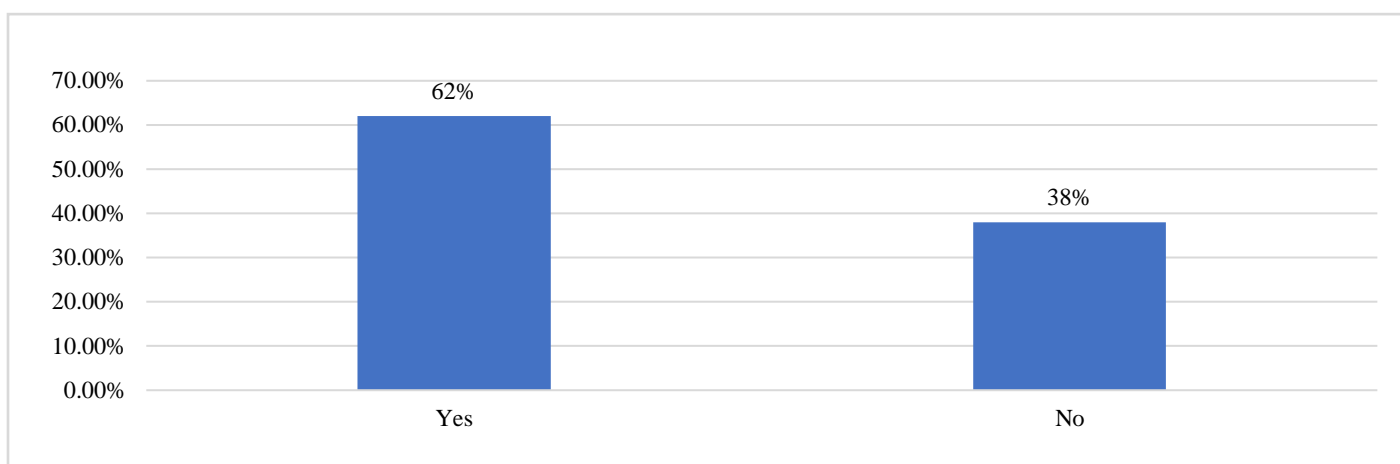


Figure 2

Study Respondents' Understanding of the Concept of Family Violence

Figure 2 presents findings on respondents' understanding of the concept of family violence. The results show that 62% of respondents indicated that they understood the concept of family violence, and 38% stated that they did not understand the concept. Out of the respondents who indicated an understanding of the concept of family violence, 37% indicated being very confident in their understanding of the phenomenon, 45% were somewhat confident, 9% indicated not being very confident, and another 9% stated that they were not at all confident in their understanding of the concept.

When asked to explain the concept from their perspective, respondents explained family violence as the direct or indirect action from one family member to another with the sole aim of causing pain or hurt". Others explained family violence from a personal perspective, indicating that sometimes the actions taken to discipline some household members, especially children, may be considered violent.

However, the intention may not be to cause pain but to discipline. Again, other respondents indicated that sometimes, parents may use extreme or excessive physical means such as slapping, hitting, and yelling or screaming as a means of disciplining their children, and this may constitute family violence."

While the respondents of this study indicate an understanding of the concept of family violence, evidence in existing literature on the general knowledge and awareness of family violence is mixed. Some authors have found and established that, indeed, some populations have never come across the word family violence. For instance, in a cross-sectional study to investigate the perception and prevalence of domestic violence among married men and women coming to the Dhiraj General Hospital in India, the authors found that a whopping 42.7% of the study participants had never heard of family violence and all its forms, including domestic violence (Shah et al., 2012). Participants of that study who had experienced acts of family violence, such as forced sexual intercourse by a spouse (18.3%), did not consider such acts as violence (Shah et al., 2012). In that study, the authors concluded that although there is a high prevalence of family violence among the study population, evidence suggests that the participant's perception of the phenomenon is low (Shah et al., 2012).

Indeed, True (2012) suggests that in some countries in Sub-Sahara Africa, certain acts of family violence, such as wife beating, are justifiable. However, there are many variations across regions and over time (True, 2012). Thus, this current study notes that acts considered family violence may be a multifaceted phenomenon which is grounded in an interplay among social, cultural, personal and other contextual conditions and factors.

In another study investigating public awareness, prevailing attitudes and perceptions towards domestic violence and abuse in the United Kingdom, Sivarajasingam et al. (2022) found that 100% of the study respondents were aware and understood the concept of family violence, with 38% of them declaring either having direct personal experience or knew someone who has suffered or experienced some form of family violence at the time of the study.

4.3 Study Respondents' Understanding of Resource Theory

The study sought to establish respondents' understanding of resource theory to understand the relationship between family violence and resource theory. To this end, respondents were asked, "Have you heard of resource theory within the context of family violence?" Respondents provided answers, which are presented in Figure 3.

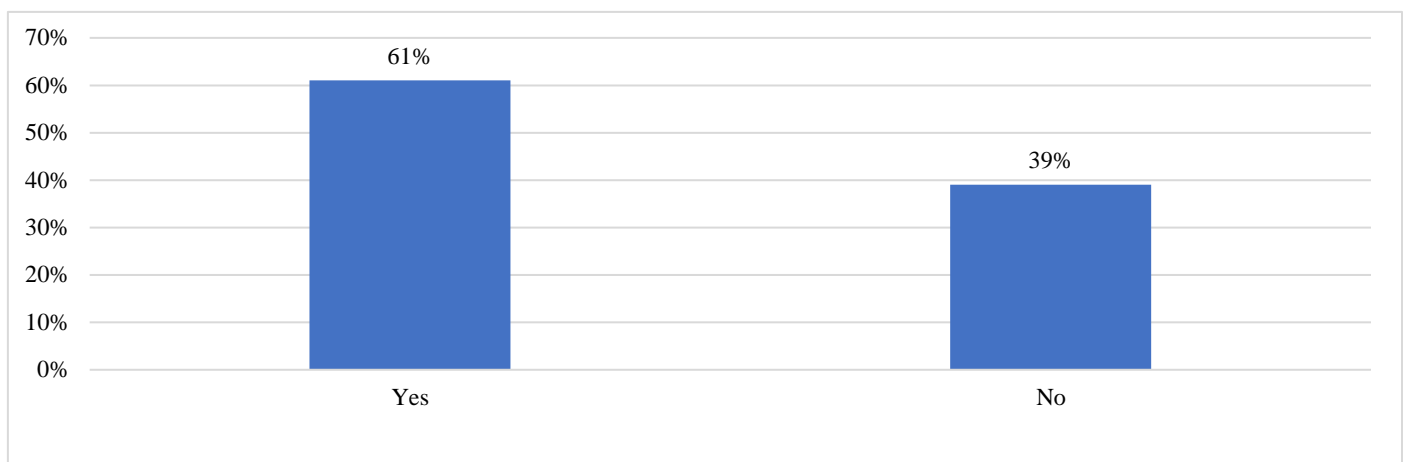


Figure 3

Respondents Knowledge of the Resource Theory

Responses to this question showed that 61% of respondents had heard of the resource theory at the time of the study, whereas 39% indicated that they had not heard of it. For respondents who knew of the resource theory, the study requested them to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement 'I am confident with my level of understanding of the resource theory' The responses to this question indicated that 16% of the respondents were very confident of their understanding of the theory, 31% were somewhat confident, 28% were not very confident and 25% were not at all confident as shown in Figure 4.

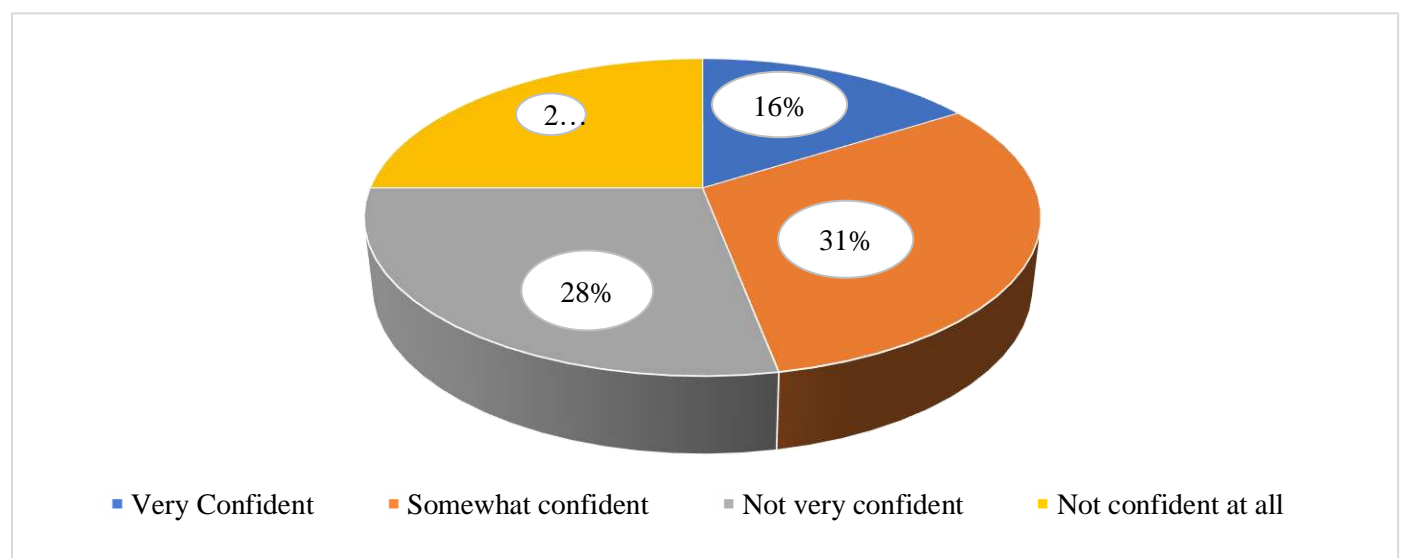


Figure 4

Respondents' level of confidence in their Understanding of the Resource Theory

4.4 Study Respondents' Views and Perceptions on the Relationship between Resource Theory and Family Violence

As the study established the respondents' understanding of the concepts of family violence and the resource theory, the next objective was to ascertain the respondents' view on the relationship between the resource theory and family violence. This study's literature review explains that researchers have claimed a relationship between the resource theory and family violence. The study, therefore, sought to find out if the same holds for undergraduate students at the University of Cape Coast who participated in the current study. For this reason, the respondents were first requested to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement 'family violence is primarily driven by a lack of resources in relationships'. Responses to this question are presented in Figure 5.

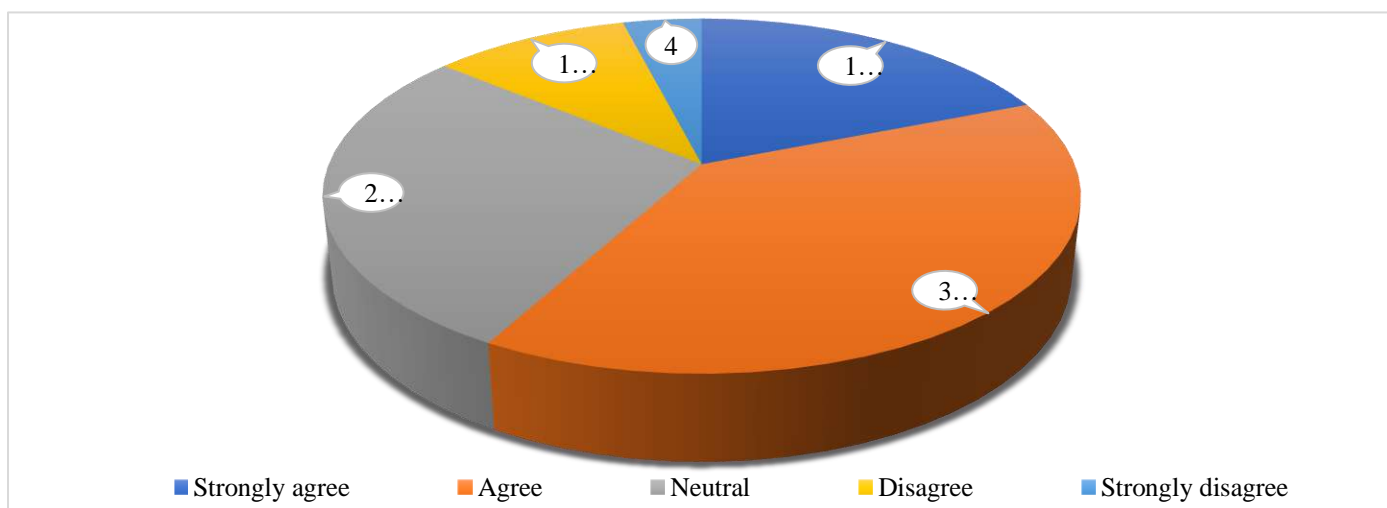


Figure 5

Family Violence is Primarily Driven by a Lack of Resources in Relationships

The results showed that 19% of respondents strongly agreed that family violence is primarily driven by a lack of resources in relationships, 39% agreed, 28% were neutral, 10% disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed. Thus, most of this study respondents believe a relationship exists between the resource theory and family violence.

Again, respondents were asked to respond to the question, 'Individuals who feel financially dependent are more likely to engage in acts of violence within their families'. This question item was also meant to solicit responses to ascertain the relationship between resource ownership in the family and family violence. The result is presented in Figure 6.

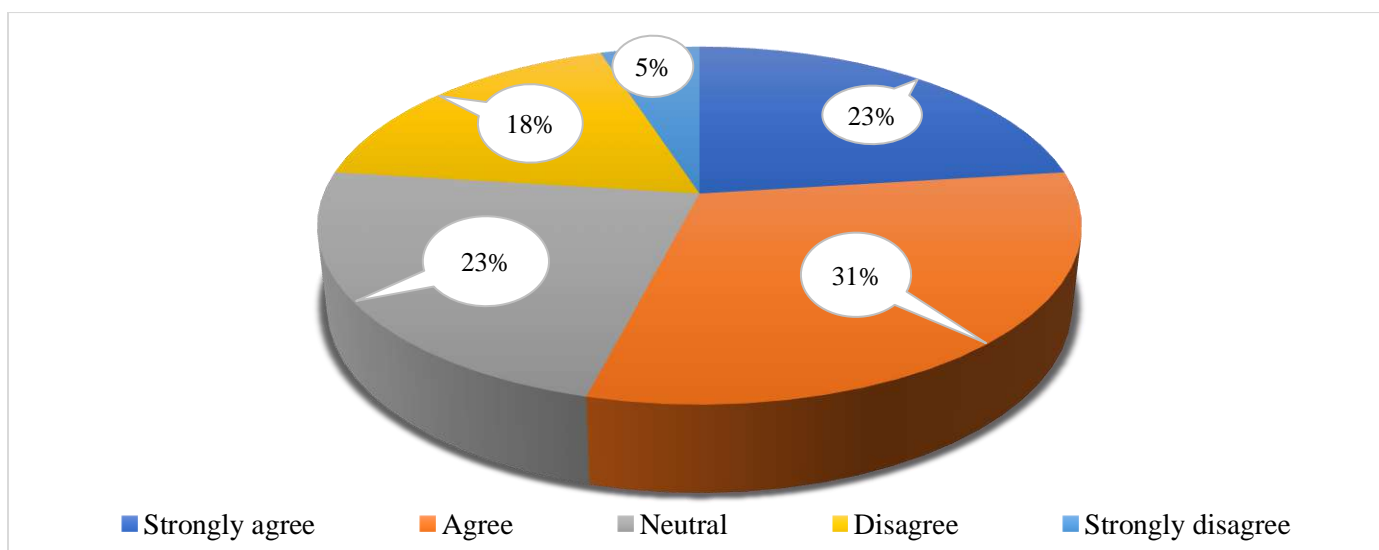


Figure 6

Financial Dependence and Family Violence

Figure 6 reveals that 23% of the study respondents strongly agree that family members who feel financially dependent are more likely to engage in acts of violence within their families. Further, 31% of respondents agree with the statement, 23% remain neutral, 18% disagree, and 5% strongly disagree.

The results of the study respondents' views and perceptions on the relationship between resource theory and family violence are shown in Figures 5 and 6, which are supported by many scholarly works and research in the existing literature. Firstly, Levinson (1989) uses the resource theory approach to understand the concept of family violence and argues that the linkage between the two concepts arises in societies where men's traditional or relative power is eroded because women's increased access to societal and economic resources will involve large scale status inconsistency for men. This broad base status inconsistency will, in turn, be associated with a general increase in violence (Levinson, 1989). Further, Levinson hypothesises that as levels of education, labour force participation, and access to political roles increase for women within certain geographic locations, family violence within that community will increase, especially as it relates to domestic violence. In studies that suggest that women who work outside the home encounter less family violence, Chin (2012) presents a counterargument and notes that for such women, a decrease in their encounter with violence simply means that they spend less time at home with the abuser and not necessarily because they have increased their portion of the family resources.

In more recent studies, some researchers have proven the point raised by Levinson (1989). For instance, in a survey of domestic violence and women's autonomy in developing countries, Eswaran et al. (2010) showed that there is no real theoretical relationship between a woman's reservation utility (or outside option) and the extent of violence she faces at home. Indeed, in some instances, increased violence against women may also be a rational male response to the greater autonomy of women Eswaran et al., (2010). Again, researchers posit that the existence of a violence backlash is a situation where female resources increase the risk of abuse hinges on the prevailing and communal acceptance and attitude towards family violence and violence against women (Sivarajasingam et al., 2022). In another study, Sivarajasingam et al. (2022) found that resources protect against violence, although resources are associated with lower acceptance of violence. The study also found that resource inequality within families and households is associated with more abuse (Sivarajasingam et al., 2022). Notwithstanding, the relationship between the resource theory and family violence remains a contentious topic as the relationship varies across socioeconomic class, nature of paid work, study methodology, and cultural background (Rahman et al., 2011).

Based on this, the current study posits that the relationship between family violence and resource theory arise due to several circumstances. Firstly, when individuals lack the resources or are unable to perform their relative roles, then violence becomes a rational response to exert control and as a means to stay relevant.

Secondly, when individuals feel threatened or recognise a change in roles that may imply a decrease in the power and authority they hold over other groups, then violence may become a necessary resource which has to be applied to hold on to the existing power and prevent oneself from vanishing into obscurity. Thus, individuals are more likely to use violence as a compensatory measure in the event of their inability to live up to their gender roles and expectations.

4.5 Establishing the Relationship between Resource Theory and Family Violence

Once the relationship between the resource theory and family violence was established, the study sought to find ways in which the resource theory might contribute or lead to family violence. To this end, the study sought to find out from respondents the factors and variables within the resource theory that might contribute to family violence. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

How Resource Theory Contribute to Family Violence

Variable	Percentage (%)	Rank
Power Imbalance	28	1 st
Need for Control	23	2 nd
Economic Stress	23	2 nd
Cultural/gender Expectations	10	3 rd
Limited access to support systems (love, time, emotional support)	9	4 th
Competition for resources	7	5 th
Mean score (%)	16.67	

Table 2 shows Power Imbalance emerging as the most significant contributory factor, with the highest percentage (28%). Thus, respondents view power imbalance as the number one consequence of the resource theory and a critical element influencing family violence. The Need for control (23%) ranked second, highlighting the importance of control dynamics within relationships, where one partner may exert control over the other, contributing to conflict

and potential violence. Economic stress (23%) was also identified as a notable factor, underscoring the impact of financial instability or hardship on family well-being and how it can escalate into abusive situations. Cultural and gender expectations (10%) ranked third, and limited access to support systems, such as love, time, and emotional support, scored 9% and ranked fourth, suggesting that a lack of emotional and social support may exacerbate stress and lead to family violence in situations where individuals feel isolated. Competition for resources (7%), though identified as a contributing factor, received the lowest ranking, implying that respondents believe it is less significant than other variables but still plays a role in the overall dynamics of family violence. These responses also yielded a mean score of 16.67%, with factors like “power imbalance” and “need for control” scoring much higher than the mean, indicating that not all factors have the same significance, although they may be contributory factors. Based on this, the study posits that family violence is a multifaceted phenomenon that occurs as a result of the interplay of numerous factors, including cultural, psychological, economic, social factors, and power dynamics.

Based on these findings, the study sought to investigate further how power imbalance, which emerged as the most significant effect of the resource theory on relationships, leads to family violence. The study thus sought respondents' level of agreement or disagreement on whether they believed power imbalance resulting from the resource theory may result in family violence, and the results are presented in Figure 7.

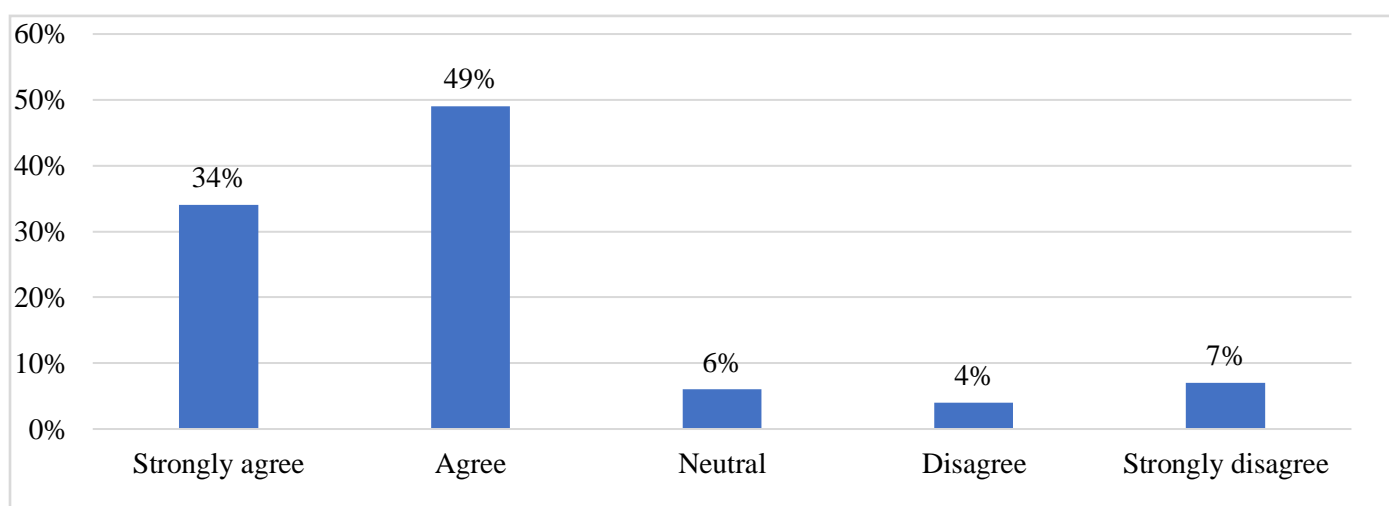


Figure 7
Perception of Resource Imbalance and Family Violence

Figure 7 shows that regarding the relationship between power imbalance and the resource theory, 34% of respondents strongly agreed that unequal access to resources creates power imbalance and is a contributory factor to family violence. Additionally, 49% of respondents agreed, 6% remained neutral, 4% disagreed, and 7% strongly disagreed. Impliedly, more than half of the study respondents believe that resource imbalance resulting from unequal distribution and access to resources can lead to negative power dynamics within families and thus contribute to family violence.

Further, the study sought to determine the relationship between the resource theory and power imbalance by finding the statistical response to the null hypothesis: *H01: There is no statistically significant relationship between the resource theory and power imbalance.* The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Relationship between Access to Resources and Power Imbalance

Test Statistic	Value
Chi-Square Statistic (χ^2)	1024
Degrees of freedom (df)	4
Critical Value ($\alpha = 0.05$)	9.488
p-value	< 0.001 (significant)
Conclusion	Reject null hypothesis (significant relationship exists)

The hypothesis test in Table 3 shows a chi-square statistic of 1024, much larger than the critical value of 9.488. The test also revealed a p-value of <0.001, less than 0.05. Based on this information, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between unequal access to resources (as described by the resource theory) and power imbalance in the context of family violence.

These findings are consistent with the work of several researchers whose investigations yielded similar results. Extending the feminist framework and its relationship with power within domestic and intimate relationships, Yllö (2005) posits a debate that suggests that the power imbalance within the system of families, marriages, or similar intimate relationships leads to violence. Such power imbalance may result from the dependency of the less-resourced family members on the more-resourced members.

4.6 Power Imbalance and Family Violence

Many scholars agree that in families where resource imbalance persists, the possibility of violence also persists. The current paper sought to determine the relationship between resource imbalance and family violence by finding the statistical response to the null hypothesis: *H02: There is no statistically significant relationship between the resource theory and power imbalance.* The result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Relationship between Power Imbalance and Family Violence

Test Statistic	Value
Pearson Chi-square Statistic (χ^2)	86.84
Degree of Freedom (<i>df</i>)	4
Critical Value ($\alpha = 0.05$)	9.488
p-value	<0.05
Conclusion	Reject null hypothesis (significant relationship exists)

From Table 4, the chi-square statistic of 86.84 is much larger than the critical value of 9.488 and a p-value of <0.05. Based on this information, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between resource-related power imbalance and family violence.

4.7 Personal Experiences and Perceptions of Family Violence Related to Resource Access

Further inquiry from their respondents on their response to the relationship between the resource theory and family violence revealed that most respondents had experienced family violence or knew someone who had experienced family violence. This result came out after respondents were requested to indicate Yes or No to the question, 'Have you or anyone you know suffered family violence?' The results are shown below.

Figure 8 indicates that as many as 79% of the study respondents had suffered or knew someone who had been a victim of family violence. However, 21% of respondents had neither suffered nor knew anyone who had been a victim of family violence. The percentage of respondents (79%) who had either suffered or knew of a victim of family violence, as reported in this study, is slightly higher than that reported by Wagers et al. (2017), whose research on college students' beliefs about domestic violence revealed that approximately 40% of the students knew of a time when police were called for a domestic dispute issue, one third knew someone who had gotten an order of protection for a family violence abuse situation and less than a quarter of the sample knew someone who had received counselling for family violence abuse as a victim or perpetrator or used a domestic violence shelter (Wagers et al., 2017).

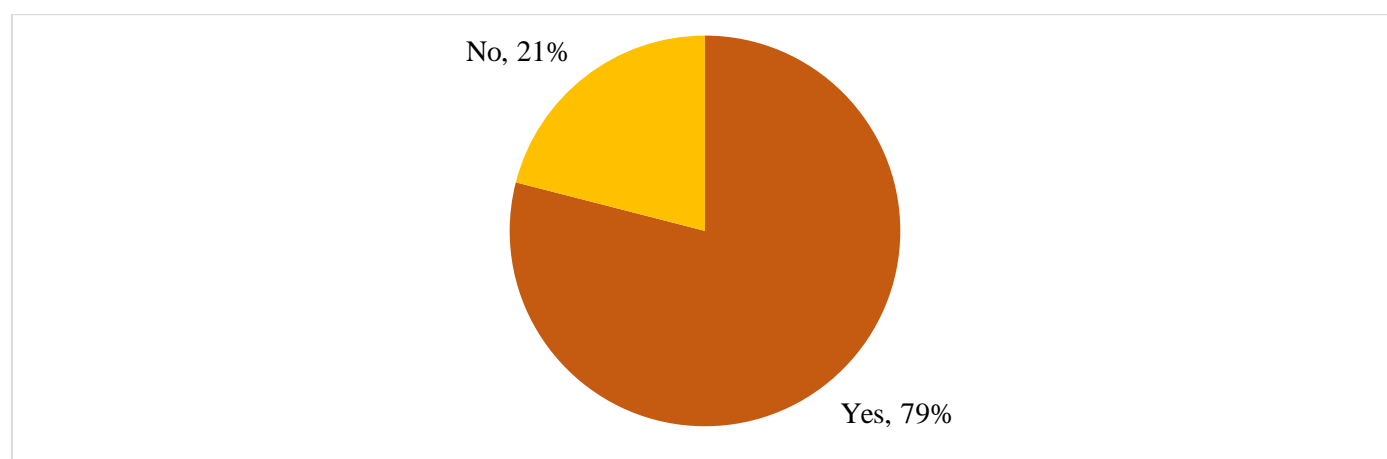


Figure 8

Study Respondents' Personal Experience with Resource-Related Family Violence

For respondents who had personal experience or knew someone who had suffered family violence, the study further requested them to indicate the type of violence they suffered or witnessed. The results are presented in Figure

10. The responses show that respondents have either witnessed or suffered family violence acts ranging from verbal assault (31%), silent treatment (37%), physical assault such as slapping and kicking (18%), and other forms that were not captured (14%) as indicated in Figure 9.

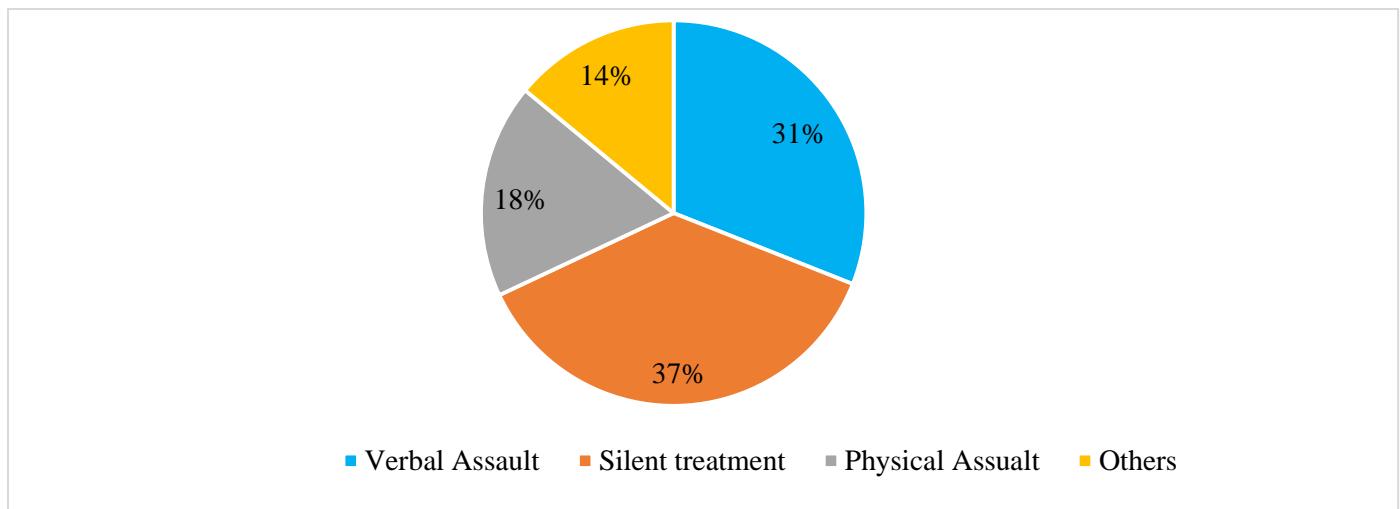


Figure 9

Types of Family Violence Experienced by Study Respondents

Once the study established the respondents' experience with resource-related family violence, the next step was to find out from the participants their opinion on the usefulness of the resource theory in understanding family violence by indicating their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement, 'I believe the resource theory provides a valuable framework for understanding family violence.' The results are shown in Figure 10.

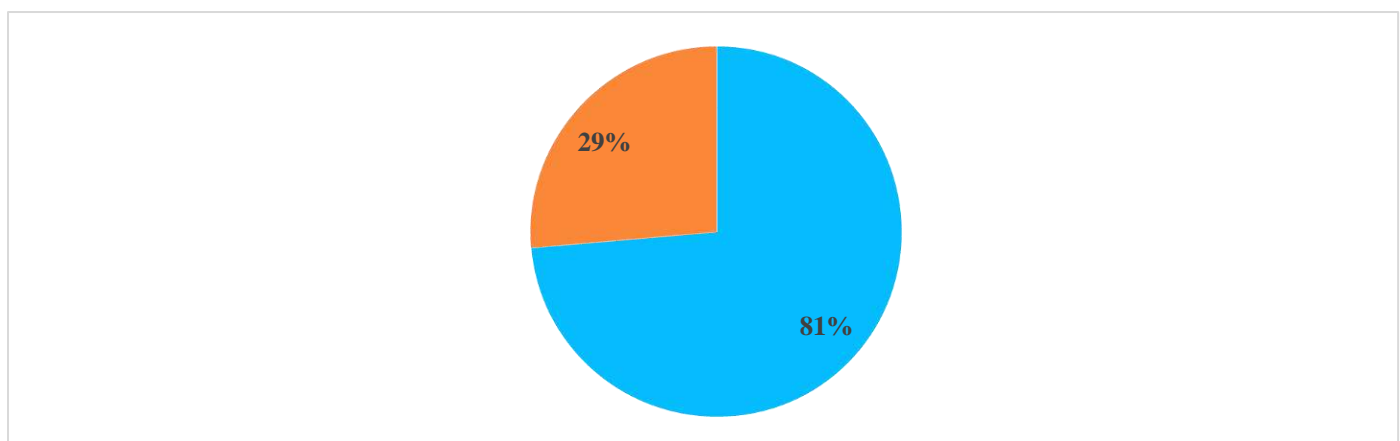


Figure 10

Respondent's View on the Resource Theory and Understanding of Family Violence

The results showed that 81% of respondents agreed that the resource theory is useful for understanding family violence, and 29% believed otherwise. Other researchers have also confirmed the usefulness of the resource theory in understanding family violence. In their work on the 'Social Foundations of Violence within the Context of China', Liu (2017) concluded that factors such as unequal socioeconomic status within families may lead to the use of violence and aggression at home. However, the study by Liu (2017) was based on integrating the resource theory of patriarchal traditions and the feminist perspective. In another study, Lawson (2012) also found that the standard resource theory, as explained in the current paper, is useful in understanding family violence only among families with lower socioeconomic status because those with lower incomes and, therefore, lower social status and prestige have fewer legitimate resources to utilise in attaining power.

Thus, this paper posits that although resource theory is related to and useful in understanding family violence, it is not exhaustive. It does not fully account for the psychological, cultural, and systemic factors that also contribute to family violence. Combining resource theory with other frameworks, such as the feminist or social learning theory, can provide a more comprehensive understanding.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

This study examines the relationship between family violence, resource distribution, and family power dynamics. The findings reveal that a majority of respondents are familiar with the concept of family violence, though perceptions vary, reflecting cultural, social, and personal influences. Comparisons with existing literature indicate regional differences in awareness, with some areas having higher public understanding than others, underscoring the need for ongoing education and awareness campaigns. The study also emphasises the connection between resource inequality and family violence, aligning with resource theory. Respondents recognised that disparities in resource distribution could lead to violent behaviours, particularly when shifts in power dynamics, such as women gaining economic or social power, provoke a backlash. This is consistent with feminist perspectives and previous studies that link resource inequality with increased violence. Additionally, the findings of this study underscore the complex relationship between resource inequality, power dynamics, and family violence. The findings reveal that a majority of respondents recognise the connection between uneven resource distribution and violent behaviour within families. This aligns with existing literature that suggests disparities in access to resources, particularly regarding shifts in gender power dynamics, can provoke violence. However, the relationship is nuanced and shaped by various factors such as culture, socioeconomic status, and individual experiences. While this study notes that while some studies suggest that resource inequalities exacerbate violence, others propose that shifts in gender roles or a perceived loss of control may trigger violent reactions. Notwithstanding, this study has established that both resource inequalities and gender role changes tend to contribute to or lead to family violence depending on the context and other environmental, communal and cultural factors.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the above, the study recommends that the relationship between the resource theory and family violence is complex and influenced by cultural, socio-economic, and individual factors, requiring further research to understand better the specific variables that contribute to family violence. Thus, the study recommends context-sensitive approaches and a recognition of the intersection between the resource theory and other frameworks, such as the feminist and social learning theories, in understanding and addressing family violence, highlighting the importance of reducing resource inequalities and power imbalances within households. By addressing these underlying factors, interventions can be better designed to mitigate family violence and foster healthier family dynamics. Future research should continue to explore the specific contexts and variables that influence the relationship between resource distribution and violence to develop more effective strategies for prevention and intervention.

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